TALES OF MY LANDLADY

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EDITED BY

PEREGRINE PUZZLEBRAIN.

ASSISTANT

TO

E SCHOOLMASTER OF GANDERCLEUGH.

Omnia vincit amor.

IN THREE VOLUMES.



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TALES

OF

MY LANDLADY.

THE PREJUDICED PAIR.

CHAPTER I.

FRANCIS Arundel Delmain, Lord Delmain, was deservedly considered an Original, even in a country which a French author declares to be a nation of Originals. From his earliest years he evinced a degree of intractability which puzzled his preceptors, and distressed his parents. His capacity was naturally good, but the pleasure which he took in thwarting his tutor, prevented his making any progress in his studies. Severity and conciliation

were tried in vain; and he would probably have grown up completely unlettered, had not his father one day in a transport of rage, declared, that he was an incorrigible dunce, who would never be any thing but an illiterate blockhead. This declaration fortunately piqued him into application, and in a short time, to the surprise and delight of his family, he gave evident proofs both of superior capacity and considerable industry.

The period of childhood is generally said to be the most delightful of our lives; but the experience of Lord Delmain convinced him that this supposition is often erroneous. Nothing, indeed, could exceed the purgatory which he suffered at Westminster School; and he is to this day recollected by his cotemporaries, as the very worst *fag* that ever passed through it. Yet, though engaged in continual quarrels, Lord Delmain was not actually disliked, for his heart was as good as his temper was the reverse; and though he delighted in teizing his young companions, he had a heart to feel for and

relieve their puerile distresses, as far as money could relieve them: though it must be confessed, that the abrupt and often rude manner in which he conferred his favours, very much lessened their value in the eyes of those who received them.

His father, the Earl of Delmain, had seen with considerable sorrow the very little promise which his son's infant years afforded; but by the time Lord Delmain had reached his fifteenth year, the Earl began to congratulate himself on having formed a too precipitate judgment; for Lord Delmain seemed likely to ripen into an estimable, though not an amiable man: but at that period he had the misfortune to lose his father, his mother had been dead two years before, and the uncontrolled indulgence which from that period, he gave to his temper, tended to alienate from him the regards of all his connexions, except his brother Lord George, who was nearly ten years younger than himself.

This child was the only being for whom the young Earl had ever evinced any

decided partiality, and that partiality was heightened, perhaps occasioned by the violent and uncontrolable spirit of the little fellow, in whose vocabulary the word submission was not to be found. But though in this respect the brothers resembled each other, in most others they were widely different. Lord George, though impenetrable to command, was accessible to persuasion: his temper was open, cheerful, and liberal; and his greatest pleasure, was to render every one around him as happy as he could.

Lord George evinced at an early period a decided predilection for the navy, in which he attained the rank of Captain; but a severe wound which he received, and which continued to be at times extremely painful to him, induced him to quit the service, in his thirty-eighth year.

Lord George was a bachelor, partly from inclination, partly from principle: his fortune was barely sufficient for the support of his rank as a single man: the Earl, indeed, would gladly have divided with him his immense income, and had

more than once insisted upon his acceptance of a part of it. On this point, however, Lord George was inflexible; neither argument nor intreaty could induce him to accept a single guinea for himself, though he made no scruple of drawing upon his brother to relieve the distresses of others; and the Earl, though he generally protested his belief that Lord George was imposed upon, never refused the supplies he demanded.

One circumstance only had ever interrupted the harmony between the brothers, this was the Earl's earnest wish to see Lord George married: he had himself made up his mind at a very early age to remain a bachelor for life, but he strongly insisted upon it that it was the duty of a younger brother to provide heirs who would continue the family in a direct line. Lord George, however, insisted that the obligation, if there was one, to continue the family was more immediately the Earl's than his. They argued this point so often and so warmly, that at last an

actual quarrel took place, and Lord George absented himself from the house of his brother for nearly three months. At the end of that period a very severe fit of the rheumatism, to which the Earl was subject, recalled his good-natured brother. The Earl, who was really rejoiced to see him, held out his hand with this *conciliating* speech: "George, we are both fools; let us then say no more about the past; and as to the future, I believe I must console myself by remembering, as the Irishman did, that posterity never did any thing for me."

"And after all," replied Lord George, "I do not see that we are either of us obliged to *commit* matrimony merely for the sake of posterity, since you know your cousin Bob Arundel must succeed to the title."

"Don't mention the profligate young rascal, "said the Earl peevishly. "To tell you the truth, he was the cause of our quarrel. You were so long absent on your last voyage, that you probably have

not heard that he is galloping the road to ruin as fast as he can."

"I am sorry for it," replied Lord George; "but you know he is still very young, and he may reform."

"I tell you," repeated the Earl vehemently, "the thing is impossible."

Lord George was too prudent to say more, but he privately determined to ascertain as soon as he could, whether Arundel was really irreclaimable.

Various causes had contributed to estrange the Arundels and Lord George from each other. The boy, when a mere child, had professed an inclination for the sea; and his mother, who doated upon him, fearful that Lord George should encourage her son's penchant for a profession which she dreaded his making choice of, behaved with so much coldness and even rudeness to his lordship, that he gradually ceased to visit her. The father of Arundel had died when he was a mere infant, leaving him wholly under the guardianship of his mother, through

whose injudicious fondness and mistaken cares, he had by the time he reached his fourteenth year, been converted from a rough hardy child, into a perfect little *petit maître*. His male relations, amongst whom Lord George was the foremost, recommended a public school; but mama was convinced that a private tutor would be infinitely more proper; and as a Frenchman must indisputably be best calculated to teach the graces, she engaged Monsieur Malcour, who was recommended to her as a man of profound learning, as well as elegant manners.

M. Malcour's classical acquirements were very slender, but his knowledge of the human heart was in the instance before us, probably more useful to him than a knowledge of Greek and Latin would have been. He soon saw the weak side of Mrs. Arundel, and very easily convinced her that her son's extraordinary talents rendered intense application unnecessary. The lady placed implicit faith in his assertions; the con-

sequence was, that the *petit maître* of fourteen, was a finished libertine at twenty; and the talents, which with proper cultivatio nwould have rendered him an ornament to society, were perverted to the basest purposes.

CHAPTER II.

Lord George Delmain lost no time in making enquiries respecting the conduct of his young kinsman, but the accounts which he received of it were very unsatisfactory; and some personal interviews which he had with Arundel himself were more so. He returned from his last interview with the young man in a very discontented frame of mind, and after pacing up and down his library for a considerable time, he stopped suddenly, and began to give vent to his thoughts in the following soliloquy:

"Why should I consider it impracticable? If any woman on earth could endure his temper, Arabella is the woman; and situated as she is, how desirable, if it can be brought about, must such a match be to her. I wish I had thought of it before."

As Lord George uttered these words, he seized his hat, and hastened with more than his usual speed to the house of his brother.

"What is the matter, George?" said the Earl, as he entered; "you look vexed."

"Vexed," repeated Lord George, "not at all; I have been on the contrary amused at something which I have heard respecting you."

"And pray what is it?"

"Why, that you intend to marry. I cannot for my own part conceive how such an absurd report could have originated."

"Nor I neither," replied the Earl gravely; "but I do not see any thing so absurd in it."

"What at your years, and with your infirmities?——"

"Years! infirmities! why, zounds! Lord George Delmain, one would think you were speaking to an old man."

"Why truly, my good brother, when one comes to be fifty——"

"Fifty; but I am not fifty."

" You are, however, forty-nine years, eight months, and——"

" Curse your calculations! It would not matter a jot if I was seventy-nine. With such a constitution as I have got, I should be still a younger man than half my juniors in the peerage."

" But really, my Lord, you should not reckon so much upon your constitution; you ought to recollect that a hereditary gout, an annual fit of the rheumatism, and a tendency to asthma, are no small draw-backs upon health."

" Upon my soul! Lord George," cried the half affronted Earl, " I am very much obliged to you, for your *polite* enumeration of my maladies. As to the gout and the asthma, you may spare your concern on their account, for I never had an attack of either in my life. The rheumatism, indeed, is at times a little troublesome, and perhaps for that very reason I ought to take a wife, in order to secure a kind and attentive nurse."

" I hope, however," said Lord George gravely, " that the world is mistaken in

supposing your choice fixed upon Miss Fermor."

"And pray why so?"

"Because I am certain she will refuse you."

"George, if I did not know you to be a disinterested fellow, I should give you credit for being a devilish designing one; for from your over anxiety on this subject, I see clearly that you are actually afraid I shall marry."

"You do me injustice. I have no notion that you will be guilty of such an absurdity; and besides, I repeat to you, that I am certain Miss Fermor will not have you."

"I do not see a single reason why she should not; and I have half a mind to propose for her, if it was only to convince you of your mistake."

"Well," replied Lord George laughing, "if you are bent on doing a foolish thing, at least keep it secret; for you certainly are not calculated to appear to advantage in the character of a rejected lover, and

rejected you will be if you address Arabella, depend upon it."

Lord George now made a hasty exit, that he might enjoy alone the success with which his harmless plot had so far been crowned.

Miss Fermor, the lady whom he had fixed upon for his future sister-in law, was at that period in her twenty-seventh year; and had about two years before supported a great reverse of fortune with singular propriety and cheerfulness. Her father, Mr. Fermor, though sprung from an ancient family, had early in life engaged in trade, and was supposed to be one of the richest merchants in London. Arabella was his only child, and it was the general belief that her fortune would be more than two hundred thousand pounds. Such a fortune, even without the attractions which she really possessed, must have drawn around her a crowd of admirers; but whether her heart was not very susceptible of love, or whether she, suspected that her numerous lovers were

actuated more by mercenary motives than by affection for her person, we know not; certain it is, that at twenty-five she was still single, though surrounded by sighing swains; but an event which happened at that period, quickly banished them. This was the bankruptcy of Mr. Fermor, who failed for more than the whole of what he was worth; and such an effect had this stroke upon his health and spirits, that in less than two months afterwards he died of a broken heart.

Lord George had always entertained a sincere regard for the Fermors, and the conduct of Arabella under these trying circumstances heightened his esteem for her into fraternal affection. Though tenderly attached to her father, she struggled with her grief for his loss, that she might comfort her mother, whose affliction was so great, as to threaten her reason. The creditors were so charmed with the behaviour of Arabella, and so well satisfied of the integrity of her deceased father, that they secured to her and her mother an annuity sufficient for the decencies, though not the

luxuries of life. Had Arabella consulted her own wishes only, she would have advised her mother to retire to the country; but she knew that when her grief had subsided she would be wretched in solitude, and she accordingly took lodgings more suitable to her mother's former circumstances than to the income they then actually had.

From that moment Arabella devoted every thought to the comfort of her mother; and though nothing could be more irksome to her than the mode of life she was obliged to adopt, she submitted to it with a cheerfulness which left Mrs. Fermor ignorant of the sacrifices she made. Though fond of literature, and accustomed to devote her leisure hours to literary pursuits, and to the practice of those elegant accomplishments in which she excelled, she deprived herself of those pleasures, that she might become not only her mother's house-keeper, but her milliner and dress-maker. Little solicitous about her own appearance, she was particularly anxious that her mother's should be ele-

gant; and perhaps she never felt either more proud or more happy than when she saw Mrs. Fermor tastefully decorated with the labour of her hands.

Though Lord George was ignorant of the complete sacrifice which Arabella made of her time, as well as the many privations she imposed upon herself, he yet saw enough to convince him that she was the best daughter in the world; and he was often indignant at what he considered the absurd conduct of Mrs. Fermor, in placing, as she evidently did, so much of her happiness in trifling pleasures, when she might have enjoyed much more solid ones in the society of her daughter, and in the decent comforts which a moderate income properly applied will always bestow.

CHAPTER III.

Lord George Delmain could not think of Arundel's becoming the representative of his ancient and honourable family, without feeling a strong wish that the title of Delmain might pass to one more capable of supporting it properly; but he entertained this wish for some time without seeing a prospect of accomplishing it. At last the idea struck him of trying whether he could, through the means of his brother's foible, draw him into matrimony; and not a little elated at having nearly succeeded with the Earl, he hastened to try what he could do with Miss Fermor.

It was, however, a delicate subject, since he was not sure after all that the Earl meant to offer her his hand. He confined himself therefore to hints of the passion which he had discovered that the Earl entertained for her, and he had the pleasure

to see that those hints were very favourably received.

Miss Fermor was incapable of marrying merely from mercenary motives, but she had attained her twenty-seventh year without experiencing the power of love: and she believed that esteem and respect were very good foundations for happiness in the marriage state. From what she had heard Lord George say of the goodness of his brother's heart, she had no doubt that he merited both respect and esteem. She knew that he was benevolent, and as the greatest pleasure which riches had ever given her, was an opportunity of contributing to the happiness of others, she would have thought the match on that account alone desirable.

Perhaps if she had been aware of the Earl's temper, she would have considered the advantages of the union more than balanced by that strange love of contradiction which rendered it so difficult to live with him; but in the little that she had seen of him, no opportunity for displaying

this foible had occurred, and she consequently remained ignorant of its existence.

Left to his own ruminations the Earl began very seriously, and for the first time in his life, to consider the grand question of matrimony. It is probable that no persuasion would ever have induced him to think of submitting to the fetters of Hymen, but he was piqued into a wish of shewing that he could have no difficulty in finding a wife. He paraded up and down before a large mirror, though by the bye he had not even glanced at a looking-glass for years before, and after surveying for some moments a figure which was still handsome, he took a pen and ink, and sat down to calculate the probable advantages and disadvantages of the connexion he thought of forming.

The first was soon done, but he found, or rather fancied that he should find, the latter so numerous, that they almost frightened him from his purpose. "But after all," cried he, throwing down the pen, "though I cannot be unmarried, I can

have a separation, if my wife should really have enough of the devil in her to make such a step necessary."

However, notwithstanding this consoling reflection, he would have proceeded no farther with his matrimonial plan, had he not been stimulated by the sarcasms of Lord George, who, to say the truth, was not sparing of them; and one morning after a smart dialogue with his lordship, the Earl ordered his carriage, and proceeded without allowing himself any farther time for reflection, to the house of Mrs. Fermor, to whom he made immediate proposals for her daughter.

The manner in which Miss Fermor accepted his hand, raised her considerably in the opinion of the Earl; who with all his peculiarities, did not want for sense; and he began to believe, that a wife might, after all, be a less troublesome appendage than he had before fancied. Naturally generous, he required no stimulants to induce him to make handsome settlements on his intended Countess, and in a short time his

nuptials were solemnized, to the great delight of his brother, and the utter surprise of all his acquaintance.

Deeply did the whole tribe of managing mamas, and their well tutored daughters, regret that they had never conceived his lordship was a marrying man. It was really provoking, that a poor insipid thing, like Miss Fermor, should have run away with such a prize. Some among the fair damsels, however, consoled themselves with the hope, that as she was such a quiet, poor spirited being, his Lordship's odd humours would soon break her heart; and they might be more fortunate with the widower, than they had been with the bachelor.

This charitable hope was not altogether ill-founded, for even the extreme sweetness of the Countess's temper could not divert her lord from that love of contradiction, which had from long indulgence, grown into his ruling passion; and strange as such a declaration may sound to most married men, there were times when he actually quarrelled with her, for that very

meekness and equanimity of temper which would have formed the happiness of any other husband. The Countess's feelings were keen, but she did not suffer them to get the better of her habitual self-command; she steadily contemplated the bright side of her prospects, and in securing to her mother those indulgences which she knew were necessary to her happiness; in the exercise of her natural benevolence, and in the resumption of her former elegant pursuits, she found the rare secret of contentment.

At the end of a few months the Countess gave her lord reason to hope for an heir. His joy on the occasion was unbounded, and Lord George, who had never felt the smallest wish to inherit the title, sincerely participated in it.

After suffering a complete martyrdom through the effects of over care, during her pregnancy, the Countess gave birth to a lovely girl. The sex of the child was a real disappointment to the Earl, but he consoled himself with the recollection,

that he might still have a son, and that if he did not, his title must descend to his daughter, and her heirs. He therefore smoothed his brow, condescended to give the infant a kiss, as he told Lord George, to please its mother; and for the first time since his marriage, he did not contradict his wife; though she asserted with more positiveness than she had ever before used in speaking on any subject, that the infant was the perfect image of himself.

Never indeed had the Countess felt so affectionately disposed towards her lord, whose extreme anxiety while she was in danger, did credit to the goodness of his heart. She petitioned for leave to suckle her infant, and the Earl, to the astonishment of his brother, told her to do as she pleased. In a shorter time than usual the Countess recovered her health and beauty, and the little girl, who was named Cæcilia, grew a perfect cherub.

The Countess had soon the mortification to find, that these hopes which she entertained of an amendment in the Earl's

temper were fallacious; however, she had now an additional blessing, which enabled her to bear it with cheerfulness. She was indeed sometimes alarmed, lest the Earl, who was perpetually finding fault with her management of Lady Cecilia, would himself interfere in the nursery department; fortunately, however, for the child he did not, and she reached her second year in health and beauty, maugre the Earl's frequent prognostications that she would inevitably die for want of proper care.

A few days after the celebration of the little girl's birth-day, the Earl and Countess with the child and her attendant were takingan airing in the New Road, when the horses, frightened at something, suddenly became restive, and set off at full gallop. Though much alarmed at their danger, the Countess clasped her child to her breast, and remained perfectly still. The attendant and the little girl screamed most violently, and their cries, terrified the horses still more. At the instant when they expected that the carriage would be dashed to pieces, the horses were stopped by a

gentleman, who received a violent kick from the fore horse, notwithstanding which, he did not let go his hold till the servants had succeeded in disengaging them from the carriage.

CHAPTER IV.

Transported to see his wife and child once more in safety, the Earl pressed the stranger fervently in his arms, and attempted to thank him, but unable to speak he burst into tears.

The stranger, who was evidently much affected at his emotion, addressed him in good English, though with a foreign accent, and expressed his pleasure at having been an instrument in the hands of Providence, to rescue his family from danger.

The Earl, who had now recovered his speech, insisted upon the stranger's returning with him to his house; a request which he did not refuse, and in a few minutes hackney coaches were procured; and the family full of joy at their providential escape, returned to Grosvenor-square; after the Countess had ascertained that the coachman, who was thrown

from his box, when the horses first took fright, was not materially hurt.

The stranger was very plainly dressed, and not particularly distinguished by personal graces; but his air and deportment were those of a man of rank; he announced himself as Baron Wallenstein, a German, travelling in England for his amusement; and the Earl recollecting that his father had formerly been intimate with a German nobleman of the same title, made enquiries which soon convinced him that the son of his father's old friend, had been the preserver of his life.

This circumstance, added to the Earl's pleasure; and finding that the Baron had with him his only son, a boy of four years old, he insisted so vehemently on the Baron and his son becoming his guests, that the German, who saw he could not not refuse without offending him, complied with his desire. He went himself to his lodgings to bring the boy, and while he was absent, the following conversation took place, between the Earl and Countess.

"My dear Bell," cried the Earl, "I want your advice."

Astonished at a beginning so unusual, the Countess looked at him a moment in silence.

"I tell you," cried the Earl, peevishly, "I want your advice. Zounds! You would be ready enough to give it, if I did not want it."

"I am quite ready to give it, my dear," said the Countess, "if you will let me know upon what subject you desire it."

"Why the fact is, that this Wallenstein, who, I am certain, from his generous disregard of personal danger, in running the risk he did to save our lives, is a noble fellow; is, if I am not greatly mistaken, as poor as Job; and I want you to devise some way, in which I can put a good round sum in his pocket, without irritating his high German spirit."

"Let us endeavour to detain him for some time, my dear lord," said the Countess; "and I hope that you and I together, will be able to devise some means

of prevailing upon him to accept a solid proof of your gratitude."

"No, no, I will have nothing to do with it; it is a thousand to one that he would refuse me, and then I should infallibly affront him. I wish you could prevail upon him to take that pretty little box, and the land I bought with it in Devonshire the other day; or if he won't have that, I have a large sum in the funds——"

"Here comes Lord George," cried the Countess; "and he will assist us in our plan."

Lord George, however, coincided with her in opinion, that some time must elapse before any step could be taken in the business; and the Earl, though impatient to give Wallenstein a proof of his gratitude, promised to remain silent, at least, for some days.

The Baron very soon returned, bringing his son Frederic with him. The child was a fine hardy boy of about four years old. He looked at first very shy, and as he spoke only German, it was not easy to

conciliate him; but though he kept aloof from every body, no sooner was the little Cecilia brought into the room after dinner, than he hastened to play with her; and in a few minutes the children were excellent friends.

The Baron with moistened eyes, accounted for this circumstance, by saying that it was only a short time before that he had lost a daughter nearly of the same age as Cecilia, of whom Frederic was very fond. "She was," continued he, "my youngest, and my darling; for she was the perfect image of her mother, who died in giving her birth; and this boy," looking at Frederic, "is now my all on earth."

The pathetic tone of the Baron affected the whole party; the Countess cast her lovely eyes to the ground to hide the tears which trembled in them; the Earl tried to hem away a sigh; and Lord George, involuntarily catching hold of the Baron's hand, "you must not, my dear Sir, talk of having only one tie on earth: you, who have this day bound to

you a whole family by the strongest ties of gratitude and affection," exclaimed he as he pressed the hand he held. The Baron returned the pressure, and strove to assume a cheerful air. The conversation by degrees became more animated; and by the time that the party rose to retire to rest, the Baron had created for himself an interest independent of gratitude in all their hearts.

Every hour increased their affection for him; and the little Frederic, who soon conquered his shyness, became a pet with the whole family. The Baron, who spoke of his affairs without reserve, informed the Earl that his voyage to England was undertaken to divert the melancholy which seized him on the death of his little girl: but that his stay in this country could not exceed a few months, as his presence in Germany was absolutely necessary to the happiness of his mother-in-law, Madame Weimar, who had always resided with him from the time he married.

"We shall grieve to lose you, my dear Baron," said Lady Delmain, who was pre-

sent during this conversation. "Do you not think you could prevail on Madame Weimar to take a trip to England?"

"If I made the request, she would not refuse me," replied he; "but I cannot make it, for I do not believe she would be happy any where but in her native country: as her national prejudices are stronger than those of any person I ever conversed with. She is, however, in every other respect so rational and amiable, that one must be severe indeed who could not pardon her the only fault she has."

CHAPTER V.

THOROUGHLY disappointed to find that he could have no hope of retaining the Baron in England, and not chusing to give vent to the peevishness which he felt creeping upon him, the Earl rose and left the room; first making a sign to the Countess, by which she understood he wished to take that opportunity of offering to the Baron's acceptance, a very handsome sum, which the Earl had made over to him and his son.

All the soft rhetoric of the Countess could not, however, prevail upon the Baron to accept it, even in trust for his child. His refusal, however, was couched in such delicate terms, and he displayed so much nobleness of spirit, that it was impossible either to blame or to be angry with him.

As the Countess was aware how excessive her husband's disappointment would

be, she did not oppose the Baron's absenting himself for the remainder of the day; and she was sincerely glad that he did so, when she saw the transport of passion to which the Earl gave way on finding that the Baron would not be obliged to him. After sending the Baron, and his absurd pride at least a dozen times to the devil, he proceeded to quarrel with Lord George for not joining him in abusing it; and finally, desired the Countess to leave the room, because her confounded apathy in listening quietly, and taking no part in the affair, irritated him more than all the rest.

Neither the sensible arguments, nor the keen raillery of his brother, were able to restore his good humour; and he retired to rest without seeing the Baron. But as he was tossing about on his pillow, a thought occurred, which promised, if he could carry it into execution, to render the proud Baron, maugre all his dislike to obligation, his debtor: and so delighted was he with this idea, that he arose as soon as it was light, and proceeded in his dressing-

gown, *sans cérémonie*, to the apartment of Wallenstein.

The latter started up in considerable alarm at his unexpected appearance, and hastily enquired the cause of it.

" The cause is, my dear Baron, that I have a proposal to make to you, which if accepted, will unite our hearts and families still more closely; and if rejected—but no, I will not allow myself to think it can be rejected."

" And pray, my dear Lord," said the Baron, with no small degree of surprise in his countenance, " what is it?"

" Why, a marriage between your son and my daughter, as soon as they have attained a proper age."

The Baron could scarcely keep his risible muscles in order, as he listened to this extraordinary proposal, to which, however, he gave a grateful assent, provided that the young people loved each other.

" Pshaw! pshaw! my dear Baron," cried the impatient Delmain, " how can a man of your sense talk in this manner?

Love each other indeed! as if the foolish fancy of a boy and a girl could be of any consequence."

"I have experienced too much happiness myself, my dear friend," said the Baron, "in a union of affection, ever to controul my son in the choice of a partner for life; and I have no doubt, that you will shew an equal degree of indulgence to the lovely Cecilia."

"You are mistaken, Baron. Cecilia shall either marry to please me, or she shall not, at least, while I live, marry with my consent at all. I don't want to sacrifice the girl to any whim of mine: your son is a fine intelligent child, I have no doubt that he will grow up a worthy, sensible man; if he does he will deserve my girl. As for her, she promises to be even prettier than her mother; and if she is but half as good, she must make her husband happy. Let me hear no more objections, my dear Baron, unless you wish me to believe that you contemn my alliance."

"You cannot think so, my dear Del-

main. You know, inferior as I am to you in point of fortune, how much I must feel honoured and gratified at such an unequivocal proof of your friendship and good opinion: but still I must repeat to you, that the future happiness of these children ought to be considered before our own wishes."

"My dear Baron," cried the Earl, wiping his forehead with great perseverance, "your mode of treating the subject, would absolutely, if I was to listen to you much longer, put me into a fever. Am I not doing every thing I can to promote their happiness, if they only possess common sense? And if unfortunately, which, however, is not at all likely, your son should turn out a romantic puppy, and my daughter a sighing, sentimental miss, have we not a right as parents, in spite of any nonsensical objections they may make to our will, to compel them to be happy? For, depend upon it, Baron, that the want of love, at least what boys and girls call love, never yet rendered the marriage state miserable."

The Baron had seen by this time enough of Lord Delmain to be convinced that all further argument on the subject would be useless; and he saw that he must either accede unconditionally to the proposed measure, or forfeit for ever a sincere and valuable friend. The alliance itself, if it could be brought about, was in every point of view most desirable; and as there was at least a possibility that the inclinations of the young people might accord with those of their parents, the Baron hesitated no longer in giving his unqualified and grateful consent.

The Earl, highly elated at having carried his point, hastened to communicate the intelligence to the Countess; who, though she would have been delighted with the match, by no means approved of the despotic measures which the Earl meant to adopt, if necessary, for its accomplishment.

As to Lord George, he disliked the scheme in *toto;* but well aware that opposition would only render his brother more

urgent for its accomplishment, he expressed his disapprobation of it only to his sister-in-law.

One of Lord George's few foibles was a prejudice against foreigners, which, however, he never carried to any offensive degree: on the contrary, he respected merit wherever he found it; and he was sincerely attached to Wallenstein, whose many amiable qualities he truly appreciated. But it was by no means certain, that the little Frederic would inherit all his father's virtues; and even if he did, Lord George thought, that a worthy Englishman of her own rank, would be much more likely to form the happiness of his niece. Besides, it was probable that Cecilia, accustomed as she most likely would be in all other respects, to blind indulgence, would dislike the match from the very circumstance of its being forced upon her. " But I worry you, my dear sister," cried the kind-hearted Lord George, as he perceived the Countess's soft features assume a sad expression while she listened

to his fears for the future happiness of her daughter: "let us dismiss this subject for a dozen years at least; perhaps if Heaven should spare us till then, instead of uneasiness it may give us pleasure to renew it."

CHAPTER VI.

As the Earl was extremely anxious that Frederic should be educated in England, he left no means untried to prevail upon Wallenstein to suffer him to remain behind; but in this respect the Baron was inflexible. He pleaded the doating fondness of Madame Weimar for the child, and the strong probability there was, that from her declining state of health, she would not survive many years; and he positively assured the Earl, that in the event of her decease, both Frederic and himself would return immediately to England.

"But," said the Earl, "Madame Weimar may recover."

"God grant it!" replied the Baron, fervently; "but if she does, she will then be able to bear with firmness, the deprivation of Frederic's society; and as soon as he

has attained his twelfth year, he shall come to your happy country, to finish his education."

With this promise the Earl endeavoured to be satisfied, and during the remainder of the Baron's stay, nothing occurred to interrupt the harmony between him and his noble guest.

Wallenstein took an early opportunity of coming to an explanation with the Countess, on the subject of the proposed alliance. She rejoiced to find that his sentiments respecting it were similar to her own; and when he declared that in the event of Lady Cecilia's disliking the match, Frederic should take upon himself the blame of breaking it off, her gratitude knew no bounds.

"I hope, however," said the Baron, as he looked at the children, who were gaily playing in a corner of the apartment, "that for my poor Frederic's sake, this will not be the case; because I think that he promises to possess great sensibility; and Cecilia's infant loveliness renders it likely she will grow up too charming to

be viewed with indifference, by a youth who will be taught by the Earl, to regard himself as her future husband."

The Earl's entrance interrupted the conversation, and shortly afterwards Wallenstein and his boy departed for Germany. The Baron quitted his new friends with unaffected regret; and to the Earl's great delight, Frederic wept bitterly on parting with his little wife, as he had been taught to call Cecilia. Lord Delmain's regrets that he could not retain the child, rendered him unusually peevish for some time after the Baron's departure; and it required all the Countess's forbearance and sweetness of temper, to induce her to submit patiently to his wayward humours.

The arrival of letters from Germany announcing that the Baron and his son had reached home in safety, rendered the Earl's temper more supportable. It was evident from the languor of the style that Wallenstein's spirits were depressed; but the Delmain family attributed it to the fatigues which he had suffered in his journey, and expected that a short time

would render him a more lively correspondent.

Little did they suspect, that the proposed union between Frederic and Cecilia, had raised a storm in the hitherto peaceful habitation of the Baron, which threatened to annihilate all his domestic comfort. But, in order to account for this, I must give the reader some particulars of Wallenstein's early life.

We have already seen, that he sprang from a family richer in honours than in wealth; but his high connections, and the promise which he gave of possessing brilliant talents, induced his father to think of bringing him forward in the diplomatic line; and he obtained for him, while he was still very young, an employment at the court of Vienna; which, though not in itself of consequence, promised to lead to high honours, provided the person who held it, had sufficient *tact* to profit by the opportunities which it would afford for his advancement.

Nature had never designed Augustus Wallenstein for a courtier; it was with real

regret, that he quitted his parental mansion, to repair to Vienna; and his regrets were more than shared by his young cousin, Sophia Weimar; who with her mother resided in his neighbourhood.

"Ah, Sophia!" said he to her, the day before his departure; "how often I shall think of you, and wish to be with you!"

"You think so now, Augustus," cried she, trying to speak in a cheerful tone; "but you will soon forget me, amidst the gaieties of Vienna."

"Gaiety," replied he, peevishly; "I shall not know the meaning of the word, enslaved as I shall be, by form and ceremony; and banished from every one on earth that can interest me."

Augustus spoke as he then thought; but he had not been a month at Vienna before his sentiments underwent a very considerable change. All the disagreeables of his situation, and they were many, vanished before the pleasure it procured him, in giving him access to a charming girl, whose surpassing loveliness had ren-

dered him her captive, the first moment he beheld her.

He had grown up with Sophia, who was only two years his junior: almost the first sentiment which either was capable of feeling, was affection for the other. Augustus had often said, and always thought, that he never could love any one as he loved Sophia: but the first sight of Miss Darnley, convinced him that he had never loved till he beheld her.

The new and delightful sensation which occupied his whole heart, brought with it no regrets for his conduct to his cousin; he had always treated her as a sister, but he had inspired a sentiment much warmer than the one he felt, and Sophia was deeply, though unconsciously, attached to him.

The object of young Wallenstein's romantic passion, was an Englishwoman of good family, and some fortune; she had been early left an orphan, and was educated by her maternal aunt, Lady Selwyn; who being herself a complete woman of the world, had done every thing in her

power to render Harriet Darnley her counterpart.

So completely had Lady Selwyn succeeded, that Miss Darnley was at twenty, a finished coquette. Cold-hearted, and selfish in the highest degree, she had in the world but one object, and that was herself; to the gratification of her own interest or vanity, she would without hesitation, have sacrificed the happiness of all connected with her.

She had, however, sufficient art to effectually veil her unamiable propensities, under the appearance of extreme sensibility; and so good an actress was she, that it was only those few who had known her long and intimately, that were at all aware of her real disposition.

Nothing doubtful that she should succeed in procuring a brilliant establishment for her beautiful niece, Lady Selwyn brought her out before she was seventeen; but though her charms excited universal admiration, the smallness of her fortune prevented men of the world from thinking of her as a wife; and the character of

Lady Selwyn, who boasted that she had herself superintended the education of her niece, deterred many, of a more generous way of thinking, from making proposals for the young beauty; who, vain of the universal admiration which she excited, rushed with avidity into the vortex of dissipation.

During two winters, Miss Darnley enjoyed the supreme delight of distancing every competitor, who dared dispute with her the palm of beauty; but she had also the mortification of not having received one proposal, which either her aunt or herself deemed worthy of her acceptance. She was, however, consoled for this in some degree, by observing that a noble Duke, whom half her acquaintance were dying to captivate, seemed seriously struck with her; and fully confident that her triumphs over others, would in the course of the ensuing winter oblige his grace to explain himself, she commenced her third campaign with great spirit.

But her anticipated triumphs were blasted, by a competitor more formidable than

any whom she had yet had to encounter. A young heiress, whose natural charms were heightened by the possession of twenty thousand a year, soon thinned the train of the beautiful Miss Darnley, whose admirers dropped off by degrees, till she found herself in the galling situation of a decayed toast.

CHAPTER VII.

The attachment which the Duke of —— had manifested for Miss Darnley, was far, from being, as she hoped and believed, of an honourable nature. He was struck with the beauty of Miss Darnley's person, but he was so decidedly averse to matrimony, that he never would have paid her any particular attentions, had. he not hoped to obtain possession of it, on easier terms than marriage.

These hopes would probably have been vain, had not the desertion of her other admirers stimulated her to use every means in her power to retain the Duke.. But, artful as she was, she had calculated too much upon her own cunning, when she supposed herself a match for a veteran libertine, to whose arts she fell a victim, at the very moment when she was exulting in the hope of speedily becoming his wife.

For any other woman in such a situation one would feel pity; but this despicable being merited only contempt; since she owed her ruin solely to the cold suggestions of vanity and avarice: nor did a predilection for her betrayer, in any degree extenuate her guilt. For some time after her fall, the Duke's extravagant fondness gave her a hope that he would keep his promise of marrying her; but she had the mortification to discover almost at the same moment, that these hopes were vain, and that she was likely to become a mother.

This circumstance compelled her to entrust the affair to Lady Selwyn, who was at first outrageous. She loaded her niece with reproaches, for what she termed her execrable folly; as to guilt, that was a word not to be found in her ladyship's vocabulary. But selfish considerations soon induced her to moderate her rage, and to take measures for concealing the effects of Miss Darnley's imprudence.

A timely retreat to a seat which Lady Selwyn had in Wales, preserved, in some

degree, Miss Darnley's reputation. But some malicious whispers as to the cause of her seclusion, rendered it very desirable for her to absent herself for a time from the scene of her former triumphs.

Lady Selwyn had a distant relation who was married to a man of some rank in Vienna, and thither she resolved to conduct her niece, in the hope of being able to procure for her, in a foreign country, such an establishment as she now scarcely expected to meet with in her own.

Lady Selwyn had been obliged, though unwillingly, to entrust her own woman with Miss Darnley's secret; and as the fruit of her shame did not live to see the light, she was very urgent with her aunt to offer Mrs. Crawford a small annuity on condition of her silence, and to part with her.

This plan Lady Selwyn steadily rejected. She had too much of her niece's selfishness to inconvenience herself by parting with a favourite domestic, who was, she positively declared, the best and most tender hearted creature in the world.

As people's ideas of goodness and utility differ, we shall just observe, that Lady Selwyn's best creature in the world, understood, to perfection, the art of concealing the ravages of time in the person of her once beautiful mistress; whose appetite for scandal and flattery she fed unceasingly by well turned compliments, and by retailing, and sometimes inventing, anecdotes of her acquaintances. As to her tenderness of heart, that was proved incontestibly by her attention to her lady's pet monkey.

Lady Selwyn had the weakness to hint to Crawford her neice's wish to get rid of her; and from that hour. Crawford, who was naturally of a most malignant disposition, was determined to be revenged. She had art enough, however, to conceal her rancour under an appearance of fawning servility, which lulled, by degrees, the fears of Miss Darnley.

Miss Darnley had resided for some time at Vienna, when chance threw young Wallenstein in her way: the smallness of his fortune would have prevented her from

even thinking of him, had she had any other offer; but he was the first conquest that she made. His birth was noble; he was in a situation likely to lead to fortune; and, as Lady Sèlwyn pettishly declared, that he would be better than no husband at all, Miss Darnley determined to rivet his chains by all those little nameless attentions, which, while they appear to betray affection, do not in effect bind the person who shews them to any thing.

Poor Augustus, who easily fell into her snares, was soon gone an age in love; but immediate matrimony was not the object of the lady, who was secretly determined not to come to an *ecclaircissement* with him, as long as she had any hopes of a better offer.

But when she found months wear away, and the insensible Germans make no attempt to induce her to alter her state of single blessedness, she suffered Augustus to have an opportunity of declaring his passion, and referred him, with every appearance of blushing tenderness, to her aunt.

To Lady Selwyn's first question, whether he had obtained the consent of his parents, he was compelled to answer in the negative; and her ladyship coldly observed, that till it was obtained, he must not think of addressing her niece.

Augustus wrote instantly to his father, whose consent he had little doubt of obtaining: but the Baron, who looked forward to his son's forming an alliance which might repair his paternal estates, positively refused his consent: and as Lady Selwyn had taken care to ascertain that he possessed the power of alienating his fortune, she forbade young Wallenstein her house.

Almost distracted at the prospect of losing his adored Miss Darnley, Augustus obtained permission to pay a short visit to his parents, and set out for his father's seat with a heart almost distracted between love and duty.

He recollected on his journey, the influence which his cousin Sophia had always had with both his parents, and determining to avail himself of it, he proceeded straight to the house of his aunt.

Madame Weimar was, as he thought, luckily absent, but Sophia was at home; and Augustus, the moment he cast his eyes upon her, forgot all he had to say in the surprise and shock which her altered appearance gave him.

To his eager enquiries, how long she had been ill? and what was her malady? she replied by assurances, that she was in perfect health; but her looks contradicted this assertion so forcibly, that Augustus could not give credit to it.

Sophia's enquiry of what had brought him home, recalled to his memory the purpose of his visit. He besought her to assist him in obtaining the consent of his parents to his union with Miss Darnley, without whom he assured her he could never be happy.

Sophia listened to him in silence, but her increased paleness, and the tremulous voice in which she promised him her interest, might have betrayed her secret to a vain man. Augustus, however, unsuspicious of the real cause of it, imagined that she feared to draw upon herself the

displeasure of his parents; and impressed with this idea, he told her, if she feared that by granting his request, she would be likely to disturb the domestic harmony of the two families, he would not urge it. Sophia, who had now recovered from her agitation, asked him with a forced smile, "how long it was since he supposed she was grown so selfish as to put a temporary vexation to herself in competition with his happiness. I only hope," continued she, "that you do not calculate too much upon my interest with your parents; depend upon it, however, that to-morrow it shall be tried."

Augustus warmly thanked her, and hastened to his father's. He was received by his parents with the warmest affection, and, as if by mutual consent, all recurrence to the cause of his visit was avoided during the evening.

Little did Augustus conceive the difficulty of the task which Sophia had imposed upon herself. Madame Weimar had for years looked forward to the union of the cousins as an event, not only pro-

bable, but certain. She knew, indeed, that the parents of Augustus would not have rejoiced at the alliance, but she also felt certain that they would not oppose it. Sophia was not rich, but her equality of birth, and the simplicity and frugality of her habits, would render her an unexceptionable wife; and Madame Weimar, who entertained no doubt that Augustus loved her, was equally astonished and irritated when his letter, announcing his passion for Miss Darnley, was communicated to her by his mother.

Sophia was aware of the disappointment which Augustus's passion had given to her mother's hopes and expectations, and she dreaded the torrent of reproaches which her interference in the matter might provoke. Her word, however, was passed, and even if it had not been, her heart told her that no sacrifice could be too painful which tended to promote the happiness of Augustus.

The next day she hastened to the Baron's to perform her promise, but for the first time both her caresses and in-

treaties were ineffectual with her aunt and uncle. She communicated their refusal to Augustus as gently as she could; but she was terrified at the despair into which it plunged him; a despair, which was alleviated only by her gentle soothings, and the hopes she held out that his parents might hereafter relent; but she was far from feeling the hope which she endeavoured to inspire, for she knew that her mother took every means to strengthen their dislike to the alliance.

Madame Weimar had written to Vienna to one of her friends, who had some knowledge of Lady Selwyn, and she received from this friend a very unfavourable account of Miss Darnley, which she lost no time in communicating to the Baron and Baroness.

CHAPTER VIII.

AUGUSTUS was obliged to return to Vienna without a hope of obtaining the consent of his parents to his union with Miss Darnley; and in a few days after his departure, Madame Weimar announced to the Baroness her intention of proceeding thither with Sophia.

"I live so solitary a life here," said she, "that it is not likely I shall ever meet with a suitable opportunity of establishing my daughter. I will own to you, my dear sister, that I should have taken this step long ago, had I not flattered myself that a mutual affection subsisted between her and Augustus. I know not what your views were for him, but attached to Sophia as you have ever appeared to be, I did not suppose you would object to receive her as a daughter-in-law."

The Baroness interrupted her, to declare,

that, except in point of fortune, Sophia would have been all they wished; " and that only objection," continued she, " time and a little prudence on the part of my son would have obviated."

" His present passion," said Madame Weimar, " may, and probably, will yield to time; but I cannot suffer my daughter to waste her youth in waiting for an event, which, even if it did happen, might not increase her happiness; since it is not likely that Augustus would select her as the object of his second choice. The gaieties of Vienna will amuse her, and it is more than probable that an opportunity will soon occur of establishing her advantageously.

Madame Weimar was not too sanguine. Sophia, who was indeed very lovely, had soon a crowd of admirers, but her heart, faithful to its first impression, resisted all the attacks made upon it. Madame Weimar scolded and intreated alternately; but as she loved her daughter too tenderly to employ coercive measures, she suffered her to reject several brilliant offers.

The generous Sophia in the mean time was not unmindful of the happiness of her cousin. She wrote repeatedly to his parents, and described in the most pathetic terms his altered appearance; nor did she exaggerate in declaring that he was so emaciated, as to be only the shadow of his former self. She endeavoured also to do away the prejudice which her mother's account of Miss Darnley had raised against her in the minds of the Baron and Baroness, and she felt herself bound to do this, equally from motives of generosity and of justice to Miss Darnley. That young lady had sought her acquaintance immediately upon her arrival in Vienna; and though the chilling reserve of Madame Weimar had prevented any intimacy between the young people, yet Sophia could not help owning that Miss Darnley appeared all that was amiable, and her manners were most captivating.

Spite of her judgment, Sophia could not help feeling an involuntary dislike to Miss Darnley, and at times a suspicion that this beloved rival was not so amiable

as she wished to appear, occurred to her. But too generous to indulge what she considered as an unfounded prejudice, she represented Miss Darnley in the most amiable colours; and these representations, added to the fears which they began to entertain for the health of their son, produced at last some effect upon the minds of the Baron and Baroness.

Their consent to the union was indeed extorted rather than given; but Augustus, happy to obtain it on any terms, flew with all the transports of a happy lover to announce the tidings to Lady Selwyn.

Her ladyship dissembled the satisfaction with which she heard him, but in fact nothing could be more opportune than the marriage of her niece at that moment. Her own extravagance and that of Miss Darnley had involved her in debts to a considerable amount; and she expected to be speedily obliged to quit Vienna. There was nothing to prevent her own return to England, but it would have been galling to her pride had Miss Darnley accompanied her unmarried,

and inconvenient besides in a pecuniary point of view. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that her ladyship graciously condescended to overlook the tardy acquiescence of the Baron and Baroness in their son's wishes, and suffered him to press her fair niece to fix an early day for their nuptials.

Sensible that his happiness was principally owing to the generous zeal which Sophia had evinced in his cause, Augustus hastened from the house of Lady Selwyn to that of his aunt. Sophia, already apprized of. what had happened, congratulated him on his happy prospects; but Madame Weimar, whose aversion to the union was heightened by a personal dislike to Miss Darnley, would not see him.

Though possessed of an excellent heart, Madame Weimar's understanding was very limited, and her prejudices invincible. She had conceived a settled dislike to Miss Darnley before she saw her; and all the art of that young lady, consummate actress as she was, failed to impress

Madame Weimar with a good opinion of her. Circumstances had recently occurred, which gave her, as she thought, reason for this dislike; but as she was satisfied that these circumstances would have weighed little with an enamoured lover like Augustus, she had never mentioned them to him.

The *femme-de-chambre* of Madame Weimar, who hadlived with her for many years, had formed an acquaintance with Crawford, who had indulged her malignity, by detailing many unamiable traits in the character of Miss Darnley.—— Krewtzner repeated all she heard to her lady, who gave implicit credit to it, and was not sorry to find an excuse for a dislike whichshe had cherished even without cause.

Her vexation, when a letter from the Baroness informed her that they had at last consented to the match, was extreme; and in the first emotions of it, she expressed so openly her wish that her nephew had never formed such a connexion, that Krewtzner, who had all the gossiping

propensities of a chamber-maid, hastened to communicate what passed to Crawford.

This intelligence was extremely welcome to Crawford, whose rapacity had latterly been but ill satisfied by either Lady Selwyn or Miss Darnley. The extravagance of both ladies had, indeed, left it in their power to give her little more than promises, the fulfilment of which she considered as very precarious. She had already saved some money; if she could add considerably to it, she would return to England, and establish herself at once in a lodging and boarding house, which had for some time been the height of her ambition. She had distantly sounded Lady Selwyn on this plan, but her ladyship had given her little encouragement to expect much assistance from her. Crawford knew that Madame Weimar was not very rich, but as she was so extremely averse to the union, it was at least probable that she would not lose an opportunity of preventing it, even though by so doing she inconvenienced herself.

Determined, however, to take her measures securely, she obtained a private interview with Madame Weimar, whose passions she worked upon so successfully, as to get from her a bond for a considerable sum, provided she fully substantiated the charge which she brought against Miss Darnley's honour.

This Crawford was fully capable of doing; and at the very moment when Augustus was felicitating himself on the near approach of the day that would render him the happiest of men, the intelligence of Miss Darnley's dishonour annihilated for ever all his brilliant prospects.

CHAPTER IX.

So firm was his belief in her truth and virtue, that nothing short of positive proof could have staggered his confidence in her; but the fact of her *accouchement* was too fully authenticated for him to doubt it, and with a heart almost bursting with grief and indignation, he wrote her an eternal farewell.

Deeply as his heart was wounded by this disappointment of his cherished hopes, he could not be insensible to the amiability of his cousin's behaviour; far from readily admitting the guilt of Miss Darnley, Sophia continued to doubt as long as doubt was possible. She urged the possibility of Crawford's being influenced by malice or mercenary motives to prefer a false accusation; and when the truth of her charge was clearly proved, she exerted herself to console her unhappy cousin;

but at the same time she scrupulously refrained from all reflections upon his fallen mistress.

"Excellent, inestimable creature!" said Augustus frequently to himself, "what a heart is her's! and how blest will she make her husband, if she ever becomes a wife!" Yet strange as it may seem, though Augustus could not help seeing that this excellent heart was inclosed in a most lovely person, months rolled away, and he felt no desire to secure it to himself. Worthless as Miss Darnley was, it was long ere he could tear her image from his heart, and when he did, he bade, as he declared, adieu to love for ever.

Happy in the constant society of Augustus, Sophia would cheerfully have devoted her days to him, and friendship: but Madame Weimar, indignant at a blindness and coldness which appeared to her unaccountable, secretly determined to insist upon Sophia's acceptance of the first advantageous offer which was made to her; nor was it long before an oppor-

tunity occurred of putting Sophia's obedience to the test. A gentleman, in all respects unexceptionable, made proposals for her, which Madame Weimar in her name immediately accepted.

Just as he quitted her, and before she had an opportunity of mentioning the matter to Sophia, Augustus entered. "You seem pleased, my dear aunt," cried he. "I could almost wager that you had heard some agreeable news."

"You might venture to do so," replied she, gaily, "without fear of losing your wager; and you will rejoice with me, when I tell you, that an opportunity has just occurred of settling Sophia most advantageously."

"Settling Sophia!" repeated Augustus with a disturbed air: "do you then think of marrying her?"

"And pray," said Madame Weimar, "why should I not?"

"She is so very young."

"You have certainly a good right to use that argument, Augustus," said Ma-

dame Weimar, with a smile; "you are, only two years older than my daughter, and yet you thought of marriage more than a year ago. But," continued she, "Sophia is herself rather averse to marriage, and I shall want your assistance, my dear nephew, in persuading her to accept of this proposal."

"My assistance," repeated Augustus, vehemently. "No, madam, I never will attempt to influence the choice of my cousin. I love her too tenderly to be accessary to her unhappiness; and I am certain, that a union formed from any other motives than those of decided preference for her husband, must render her miserable."

As Augustus concluded his speech, he hastily retired, leaving Madame Weimar delighted with the discomposure he had evinced on hearing that Sophia was likely to become the wife of another.

Unable to define his own feelings, Augustus asked himself repeatedly why the thought of Sophia's marriage should give

uch a pang to his heart? He could not believe that he loved her, at least he was very certain that his affection for her was very different to the ardent passion which he had felt for Miss Darnley. Yet he could not bear to think of her becoming the wife of another. He retraced her whole conduct to himself; he felt convinced that she loved him as a brother; and he sighed bitterly, when he reflected that this affection would soon be lost in the new tie she was about to form.

Fully bent on asserting his claim to her regard, whoever possessed her hand, he went to see her, and found her in tears. He inveighed against the tyranny of his aunt, when he understood that they were caused by her positive commands that Sophia should accept the hand of Mr. Kramer. "But surely, my dear cousin," said he, "you will not tamely submit to such an arbitrary proceeding?"

"I wish I could think of any expedient to prevent it, without incensing my mother," said Sophia, while her tears streamed afresh.

There are few women who become tears,

but Sophia was one of the few; and Augustus thought he had never seen her look so handsome as at that moment.

"I could point out a means to you," said he, "of escaping this odious marriage; but I fear it is one which you will reject."

"Oh no, dear Augustus, name any means, except positive disobedience to my mother, and I will most gladly accede to it."

"Ah, Sophia!" said Augustus, "will you not retract when I tell you, that I see but one means, that of making this hand mine for ever."

As he spoke he fervently pressed the hand which trembled in his; but mis-interpreting the cause of Sophia's agitation, he continued,—

"I know, my dear cousin, that your affection for me is merely a sisterly regard, many little circumstances convince me of it; and I knew not that I wished to inspire you with a warmer sentiment, till I saw myself on the point of being deprived of you for ever. I find now, that there is

no happiness for me but in your society. Accept then, dearest Sophia, of a heart that is all your own, and I will trust to time and my unremitting attentions to secure a return of affection."

Tears of pleasure suffused the bright eyes of Sophia at an avowal so long wished for, and so little expected; and in a short time, with the full consent of her mother, and Augustus' parents she became his wife.

Matrimony, so often said to be the grave of love, only served to increase that of Augustus for his Sophia. He soon learned how long and how tenderly he had been beloved, and his was a heart that could deeply feel, and justly appreciate the noble conduct of Sophia to her rival.

The death of his parents, who survived his marriage but a very short time, was the first interruption to his felicity. This event was followed by some circumstances, which disgusted him so much with the court, that he resigned his prospects of future preferment, and retired, with his wife and her mother, to his family seat,

where Frederic was born, and where he enjoyed, for some time, a felicity which rarely falls to the lot of mortals.

Wallenstein spoke and understood English perfectly well: he was conversant with the works of all our best authors, and had expressed more than once an inclination to visit England. This desire had been vehemently opposed by Madame Weimar, who, fondly attached to her own country, could see nothing to admire in any other; and least of all in England, a land which she cordially detested, because it was the native place of Miss Darnley, whom she never forgave for the sufferings which she had, by captivating Augustus, occasioned to Sophia.

That amiable girl herself, who was far from participating in her mother's dislike to the English, would gladly have accompanied the Baron in his projected tour, but consideration for the feelings of Madame Weimar induced her to conceal her inclination for the journey, and the idea was given up.

CHAPTER X.

The second pregnancy of Sophia promised an increase of happiness to her doating husband, who anticipated with delight, the moment that was to present him with a second pledge of her affection. It came, alas! to the destruction of his felicity. Sophia lived to give birth to a girl, and in a few hours afterwards she was a corpse!

Augustus would in all probability have sunk under the excess of his anguish for the loss of this inestimable woman, had he not roused himself from the indulgence of it, for the sake of her mother and his children; and when the first violence of his sorrow had subsided, he exerted himself to make up to those dear orphans, and to that respected mother, for the severity of their loss.

The visible change in the temper of Madame Weimar rendered this task a most irksome one; but her petulance made no alteration in the care and attention with

which the Baron strove to anticipate even her wishes.

Though tenderly attached to both his children, Sophia's resemblance to her deceased mother rendered him more passionately fond of her than of Frederic; and her sudden death, tore open afresh the wounds which time was beginning to close. The severity of his mental sufferings affected his health; his physicians prescribed change of scene and amusement. His long forgotten wish to visit England occurred to him, and he determined to go there; but he could not resolve to go without Frederic, and Madame Weimar with difficulty consented to part with the child, upon condition that both the Baron and his son should return in a few months.

Always attentive to her comforts, Wallenstein delayed his own departure till the arrival of a distant relation, whom he had invited to remain with his mother during his absence; and out of consideration for her he returned to Germany at the appointed time, although, had he consulted his own gratification, he would have re-

Madame Weimar's numerous questions of how he had passed his time, and what acquaintances he had formed, drew from him a detail of his adventures with the Delmain family; and the sort of engagement between Frederic and Cecilia, which the Earl and himself had entered into. But he heartily repented of having mentioned the subject, when he saw the effect which his communication produced upon Madame Weimar.

It required all the goodness of the Baron's heart, and all the self-command which marked his character, to induce him to listen patiently to the undeserved reproaches of his mother-in-law. She reproached him with his partiality to England, as if it had been the greatest crime, and she declared that the thought of her grandson's allying himself to one of that detested nation, would shorten her days.

The promise which Wallenstein had made of sending Frederic to England for education, exasperated her nearly as much as the proposed marriage; and it was some time before the Baron could so far soften

her anger, as to induce her to grant him a patient hearing.

When he did at last obtain it, he had the mortification to find that all his arguments in favour of the alliance were thrown away. When he urged Cecilia's exalted rank, her immense wealth, the promise which she gave of inheriting her mother's goodness and beauty; Madame Weimar replied, "but she is English, and I shall be deprived of the affections of my child, the only relic of my beloved Sophia, left to have my eyes closed by strangers, because you will marry him to an Englishwoman, and send him to reside in England."

The Baron, whose affection for his son was wholly free from selfishness, was amazed and disgusted at the obstinacy with which Madame Weimar continued to express her abhorrence of the proposed union; and he fully resolved to send Frederic to England, before he was of an age to imbibe his grandmother's prejudices. We will now leave him occupied with the care of forming the mind of his son, and return to the Delmain family.

Cecilia's early years gave a rich promise of perfection, had she been kept under proper restraint; but she was the darling of her father, whose temper, as far as regarded her, seemed to have suffered a total change, for if he could have prevented it, she would never have known what contradiction was. It must be confessed, however, that he made himself rich amends with every body else, for the facility with which he yielded to the wishes of Cecilia, since she was the only one of his family whom he did not tyrannize over without mercy.

The Countess strove by the most unremitting attention to her daughter's education, to counteract the effects of his mistaken indulgence; and had she been spared, it is most probable that the faults to which Cecilia afterwards owed so much unhappiness, would have been nipped in the bud.

It was the will of Heaven that Lady Delmain should be early called to receive the reward of her virtues. She died soon after her daughter had attained her fifth year; and the suddenness of the awful

summons, did not give her time to execute a plan which she had long meditated for securing the happiness of her daughter.

Her plan was, to obtain, if posible, from the Earl, a promise that the inclinations of Cecilia should not be forced, if they really were adverse to the match. The Countess had long felt herself declining, and as she knew that the Earl, with all his querulousness, did not want either humanity or affection for herself, she intended, if her recovery was pronounced impossible, to make it her last request, that her daughter might have at least a negative voice in the choice of her future husband. But no previous illness warned the amiable Countess of her approaching dissolution: She arose in apparent health, while at breakfast she complained of a violent pain at her heart, and in a few minutes she was no more.

Her death was long and deeply lamented by the Earl, whose conscience bitterly reproached him with the irascibility of temper which had so often embittered her days, and he firmly resolved to endeavour to compensate; as far as he could, by his

care of the child, for the pangs which his perverseness had so often caused the mother.

The Countess had placed about the person of her daughter, as nursery governess, a respectable woman, who had lived with herself for some years as *femme-de-chambre.* But this good woman, who was no proficient in shewy accomplishments, was obliged, in a few months after the Countess's death, to resign her little charge to the care of Miss Sprotzler, a German lady, who had been highly recommended to the Earl.

The Earl was, however, too tenderly attached to the memory of Lady Delmain, to remove Mrs. Philips from the nursery of Lady Cecilia. He continued her salary, and even offered to augment it if she wished, provided she would remain as the attendant of Lady Cecilia.

Mrs. Philips declined any advance of salary, but she gladly agreed to remain with her young lady, to whom she was most tenderly attached; and she treated the new governess with a degree of respect-

ful deference, which would have procured her the friendship of a generous mind.

Unfortunately for the motherless innocent thus committed to her charge, Miss Sprotzler was of a disposition very opposite to that of the upright and sincere Mrs. Philips. She had some abilities, little principle, and a large stock of dissimulation. Her ambition was to shine as a *bel esprit*, but until she entered the Earl's family, she had found her time so fully occupied by the tuition of her pupils, that she had no opportunity of immortalizing herself by her exertions in the service of the Muses.

Neither the person nor manners of Miss Sprotzler, were very prepossessing; and it unfortunately happened that the first thing which she was required to teach her little pupil, was German; in which the Earl was determined that she should become, at an early age, a proficient. Whether Cecilia inherited her father's love of contradiction, or whether the method adopted by her governess was not a good one, we cannot say; but certain it is, that her pro-

gress was very slow, and Miss Sprotzler, whose temper was none of the mildest, was exceedingly irritated at the repugnance she betrayed to learn the language.

In order to quicken her desire of attaining it, she repeated to her incessantly, that her little husband would think her a dunce, and would never love her if she could not talk German. Cecilia was naturally curious to know who this little husband was, and no sooner did she learn that he was a German, than she extended to him the dislike which she had already conceived to her governess, and to the German language.

Cecilia was at that time little more than six years old, but it is certain that the mind of a lively and feeling child, may, even at that age, be impressed with prejudices, not easily to be eradicated in riper years. And every thing tended to increase the prejudices of Cecilia. She learned, with the greatest facility, all that was taught her, except German; but her father's eagerness, that she should acquire that language, and the ill-judged zeal with

which her governess tormented her to study it, embittered some of her early years; and as she grew older, the manners, habits, and dispositions of her governess, who was the only German that she knew, tended to prepossess her still more strongly against the country.

Lord George, who was exceedingly fond of his niece, was by no means pleased with her governess. He did not, indeed, know how exceptionable the morals of Miss Sprotzler were, but he saw clearly, that her manners were by no means such as a woman's should be, who had to form those of Cecilia. Lady Westbrook, an old friend of the late Countess, had very warmly recommended an Englishwoman of superior acquirements as a governess for the little heiress; but the circumstance of Miss Sprotzler being a German, decided the Earl in her favour.

Perfectly aware that opposition to the wishes of the Earl would be useless, unless he could prove that the governess was really unworthy of her charge, Lord George contented himself with doing all in his

power to cultivate the naturally good dispositions of his niece; but as he did not reside with his brother, his opportunities for doing so were not very frequent.

The Earl divided his time between a seat called Belleville Lodge, which he had in Herefordshire, and his house in London. The latter, indeed, he would not have visited after the Countess's death, but for the sake of giving Cecilia the advantage of masters.

As she grew up she displayed an excellent capacity, great sweetness of temper, and a very good heart. Her faults were those of her education. Taught from her earliest infancy to consider herself as a person of great importance to others, she never thought of putting any one's comfort or convenience in competition with her own: yet she was not naturally selfish; on the contrary, her disposition was uncommonly generous, but she was naturally vain; and this foible was nourished by the adulation bestowed upon her by every body, but her uncle George and Mrs. Philips.

CHAPTER XI.

The situation of Miss Sprotzler, in the family of the Earl, would have rendered a rational woman perfectly happy; but we have before said, that she was anxious to gain a high poetic reputation; and to this anxiety, the welfare of her pupil was in a great degree sacrificed. It was the positive command of the Earl that she should never suffer Lady Cecilia out of her sight. The child, who had more than usual vivacity, was a sad interruption to Miss Sprotzler's studies; her questions, or her frolics, often robbed the world of a luminous thought, or an elegant phrase; and the anger of her governess on these occasions was expressed in a manner so comic, that the little urchin delighted in provoking her.

It was in vain that she endeavoured to give Cecilia a taste for similar pursuits.

Cecilia was not destitute of abilities, but she was too indolent to exert them. She tried once, indeed, to compose an elegy upon the death of Miss Sprotzler's favourite cat, but she chanced to glance at a mirror as she was writing, and she threw down her pen with a declaration, that as composition made her look as grave and as ugly as the deceased tabby herself, she never would attempt it again. And spite of the extravagant encomiums which her governess bestowed upon the four lines that she had written, she kept her word.

Anxious to devise a means of employing Cecilia in a manner that would absorb her whole attention, Miss Sprotzler hit upon the expedient of suffering her to read romances. From that moment she had no cause to complain of being interrupted. Transported with the new world to which these pernicious volumes introduced her, Cecilia studied them with an attention, which rendered it painful for her to attend to any thing else: and in a short time her taste became so vitiated;

that she really felt no pleasure in any other species of reading.

Her new studies augmented her dislike to an alliance with young Wallenstein, whom she now regarded almost with horror; and she firmly determined that neither force nor entreaty should induce her to become his wife.

There was, indeed, some prospect that she would never be called upon to fulfil her part of the contract, for the health of Frederic, as he grew up was very indifferent. As he approached his twelfth year, the Baron made preparations for sending him to England, but a dangerous fit of illness, from which he recovered very slowly, obliged the Baron to defer the projected journey, although he very earnestly wished it might take place.

During the three ensuing years, the very precarious state of Frederic's health rendered it impossible to remove him from Germany. The Baron had procured him an excellent preceptor, but he was also himself indefatigable in forming his mind, and his labours were richly repaid. Frederic's

heart and understanding were of the first order, and the Baron exulted in the hope that his maturity would realize the brilliant promise, which his dawn of youth afforded. But, alas! poor Wallenstein himself was not destined to enjoy the happiness which he often anticipated of beholding his son settled in life; a malignant fever carried him off, just as Frederic had attained his fifteenth year.

This was a severe blow to the heart of the youth, who loved his father better than any human being; and whose naturally warm affections, had now no object except his grandmother. The Baron's death had been sudden, but not so much so, as to prevent his explaining to Frederic his reasons for the strong wish which he entertained, that the projected union between Cecilia and himself should take place. Frederic would have given a solemn promise to perform his part of the engagement, but the Baron would only accept of a conditional one. "It is probable, my dear son," said he, "that the inclinations of Lady Cecilia may be adverse to this

marriage, and I trust that no selfish consideration would induce you to suffer any violence to be offered to them. Neither would I wish you to marry her, if you found that she was not a woman likely to render you happy. All, therefore, that I desire is, that you will guard your heart from any boyish passion for another; and that if Cecilia should prove amiable, and is not averse to the union, you will give her your hand."

This promise Frederic readily gave, and in a few hours afterwards the Baron breathed his last. The guardian of young Wallenstein immediately gave information of the death of the Baron to Lord Delmain, informing him at the same time, that he had desired that his son might proceed to England, soon after his decease. The Earl had conceived a sincere friendship for the Baron, and had flattered himself that the close of their lives would be spent together, and he was visibly affected at the news of his untimely death.

"Well," said he, after a long pause, "I have often anticipated how happy the

union of our children would make poor Wallenstein and myself; but God's will must be done. I wish, however, that the young folks were of an age to be married, for I think, if I once saw them united, I could close my eyes in peace."

Lord George sighed, but he made no reply. He concurred, however, with his brother, in thinking that as the Baron was now no more, young Wallenstein could not too soon visit England; but months elapsed, and still he came not. At last a letter arrived from Madame Weimar, in which she acquainted the Earl, that she should ere then have yielded to the wishes of her deceased son-in-law, had she not for some time laboured under a cancer in her breast, which, from being improperly treated, had every appearance of becoming mortal. "My grandson," pursued she, "is now all that remains to me on earth, and bitter indeed will be my last moments if he is not present to close my eyes. In the solitude in which we live, he cannot have the same advantages which a resi-

dence in England would procure him; but my death will soon leave him at liberty to acquire that polish, which is the only thing that you will find wanting to render him worthy of your daughter."

"Waive then, I beseech you, my Lord, the right which I know you have, to insist upon Frederic's immediate arrival in England; and suffer him to cheer the short period of existence, which yet remains to me; brief as the space must be, I shall require all the consolations which filial tenderness can bestow, to smooth my passage to the tomb; and I adjure you, my Lord, for God's sake, do not deprive me of them."

* * * * * *

The Earl flung down the letter, of which the above is an extract, in a mingled transport of concern and vexation. "Living or dying," cried he, "this woman is to be my bane. Had it not been for her, in the first instance, the boy would have been educated here; and now, when by the death of his father, he seems to be thrown absolutely upon my protection, at

a time too, when he is still young enough to be formed to all that I could wish, her illness is to be made a plea for depriving me of him. Never surely was any thing so confoundedly vexatious."

A second perusal of the letter, and a little reflection, induced him, however, to think, although reluctantly, of granting Madame Weimar's request. "She talks," said he, to Lord George, "of having but a short time to live; but who knows if I was to deprive her of the boy, whether she might not, like a true woman, die directly, out of mere perversity, and then the rest of my life would be embittered by the thought that I had destroyed her. Confound the women altogether; I never knew one that was not a plague, except my poor Arabella, and she was too good for this world."

CHAPTER XII.

The Earl's voice faltered, as he paid this just tribute to the excellence of his deceased wife, and after a pause, he resumed in a softened tone: "as I must consent, the sooner I signify my intention to do so, the better; but, as I cannot bring myself to do it graciously, I wish you would take the trouble of writing in my name to Madame Weimar. You had always the knack of doing things in a handsome way; as for me, I never could acquire it."

"Very probably," replied Lord George, "because you never tried; but, if you do not do kind things handsomely, at least you do them effectually; and I believe that you have never yet done a benevolent action, upon which you will reflect with more pleasure than upon this."

Madame Weimar's disorder was, how-

ever, of a much more lingering nature than she had expected. But let us return to Cecilia, whom we must present to the reader just as she had turned her fifteenth year. Her person was much more formed than those of girls at that age usually are. Her features strongly resembled those of her deceased mother, but they were less regular, though far more attractive. There was a bewitching archness in her smile, a mixture of softness and animation in her full dark eyes, which rivetted your attention, and deprived you of the power to scrutinize her other features; or if perchance you were proof to their witchcraft, the variable expression of her countenance, which was captivating in all its changes, gave you no time to try it by the cold rules of criticism.

Such was Cecilia, as she approached her sixteenth year. The Earl, though proud of her charms, would have been better satisfied, had her appearance been less womanly; for although Madame Weimar was reduced almost to a skeleton, there was no prospect of her dissolution, and of

course no chance of Frederic's visiting England.

Previous to the Earl's family quitting London for Belleville Lodge, Lady Cecilia went one morning, accompanied by the Dowager Lady Westbrook, and Miss Sprotzler, to make some purchases of trinkets. While Cecilia and Lady Westbrook were busily engaged in examining them, a gentleman entered the shop, at the sight of whom Miss Sprotzler started, and walking to another part of the shop, addressed some questions to the shopman; standing at the same time with her back to the stranger, as if anxious to avoid him.

An exclamation from Lady Cecilia of, "do come here, Miss Sprotzler, and look at this beautiful necklace," obliged her to turn round, and at the same moment her eyes met those of the gentleman, which were fixed upon her with an indescribable sort of expression, which caused her to blush deeply.

Her confusion, however, was but momentary, and she gave her opinion of the trinkets with her usual volubility.

The ladies soon afterwards quitted the shop, but not before Lady Westbrook had observed that the stranger, who had very much the air of a man of fashion, regarded Lady Cecilia with visible admiration.

Miss Sprotzler congratulated herself upon getting so well through a rencontre, from which she had at first apprehended very serious consequences; for the stranger was in fact an old acquaintance whom she had no wish ever to behold again. But she began to fear that her congratulations were premature, when she received that evening, a note desiring her to fix a time and place for an immediate interview.

Not daring to refuse this command, for in fact it was so worded, the governess sent Mr. Melburne, for that was his name, an appointment for the next day, and until the hour for keeping it arrived, she tormented herself with anticipations of the probable evils likely to result from it.

That the reader may be convinced she did not torment herself without a cause,

we shall hasten to relate her reasons for dreading this interview.

Mr. Melburne had some years before he beheld Cecilia, been passionately enamoured of a lovely girl, the daughter of a respectable tradesman, in whose house Miss Sprotzler lodged when she first came to England. This girl, who was named Nancy Summers, had a very weak understanding, but she had received a religious education, and was naturally well disposed. Melburne, who was extremely fond of her, had no sooner succeeded in seducing her, than he pressed her to elope and live with him as his mistress; but though she had fallen from virtue, she was still alive to public shame; and the thought too of what her parents would suffer, if she thus abandoned herself to an infamous course of life, assisted her resolution to reject this proposal. In a short time she discovered that she was pregnant, and the grief which that circumstance occasioned her had a visible effect upon her health.

She had no female friend to whom she dared confide her secret; but Miss Sprotzler, then little known to her, suspected how matters stood, and soon wheedled the poor girl into a full disclosure of the affair. She suggested to her, that the only means of concealing it would be to get into the country; and she offered, provided Mr. Melburne would be at the expense of their journey, to accompany her, and to devise a pretext for their going together. Melburne readily desired Nancy to draw upon him for whatever sum she wanted; and Miss Sprotzler, affecting to be indisposed for a few days, expressed a wish to go into the country, provided the parents of Nancy would suffer her to be the companion of her journey. The poor old people, who had the highest opinion of their lodger, gladly complied with her desire, and Nancy and her friend retired to a village at some distance from a fashionable bathing place.

During the time of Nancy's accouchement, Melburne laid siege to a rich heiress, whose friends, eager to remove her

out of his reach, took her abroad, and he quitted the kingdom abruptly in pursuit of her. But he was not unmindful of Nancy: knowing how tenderly she was attached to him, and fearful of alarming her, he wrote to Miss Sprotzler, to whom he assigned some plausible reason for his absence, and inclosed a draft for five hundred pounds, which he informed her he meant as a provision for the child if it survived. He earnestly recommended to Nancy herself, to return as soon as she could to the house of her parents, and to endeavour to settle herself in some honest and reputable way of life. He expressed some doubts of returning to England, at least for many years, and he bade her farewell, in a manner that shewed he considered the connection at an end.

Miss Sprotzler had no sooner perused this letter, than she felt tempted to appropriate the draft it contained to her own use; and the more she considered the matter, the more she became persuaded that she might do so with safety. She accordingly revealed to Nancy, but with

caution, that he had quitted the kingdom suddenly, and she affected to join her in the hope, that as soon as he had arrived in safety on the continent, he would write and send her his direction.

This hope sustained the spirits of Nancy for a considerable time; but when her money began to be exhausted, and no tidings of Melburne arrived, she believed herself and her infant entirely abandoned, and she became a prey to despair. Her feelings were the more poignant, because she doated upon her child to such an excess, that could she have devised any means of existing with it in obscurity, she never would have parted with it. Miss Sprotzler soothed her by a promise to be answerable for the expenseof nursing it; and persuaded her to place it out, and return to London.

CHAPTER XIII.

SHE did so, but from the moment of her parting with it, she seemed to have no longer any relish for life. Her parents remarked the change in her disposition with grief, and they did every thing that was possible to amuse her; but she knew the strictness of their principles too well to dare intrust them with her disgraceful secret: and she was in consequence deprived of the only thing that could have cheered her spirits—the sight of her child.

Nor was this all: the infant had now been some months at nurse, and Miss Sprotzler had advanced a considerable sum for its maintenance. Poor Nancy had no idea how this sum was to be paid; and she saw with terror that every day rendered the debt more heavy. While her mind was in this distracted state, she attracted the notice of another libertine, who

made her the most splendid offers. The unhappy girl, who had no reserves with Miss Sprotzler, acquainted her with his proposals, and the depraved Sprotzler advised her to accept them. Nancy did not yield without a struggle, for she was not naturally vicious; but her strong affection for her child, the impossibility in which she found herself to provide for it, her dread that her parents would some time or other discover her secret, and abandon her to want and disgrace; all these considerations induced her to plunge deeper into infamy, and she became the avowed mistress of an unprincipled libertine, who was speedily satiated with her person, and left her, in a few weeks, without performing any of the promises which he had made to provide liberally for her future support.

A considerable time elapsed before Melburne returned to England, and when he did, Nancy's idea was obliterated by new pursuits and new pleasures. Returning home one night from the opera, he per-

ceived two watchmen dragging between them a female, who appeared unable to walk. Melburne supposed that she was intoxicated, but the feeble accents in which she begged of the watchmen to let her go undeceived him.

"Let you go," cried one of the men in a brutal tone, "not till we have lodged you in the watch-house. What business can you have in the street at this hour of the night?"

"Alas!" replied the poor wretch, "I have no where else to go."

Melburne was not destitute of common humanity: he advanced to one of the watchmen, and slipping some silver into his hand, begged of him to let the woman go.

Before the watchman could reply, the female shrieked and fainted. Melburne stooped to assist her, and recognized with inexpressible horror in her livid and disfigured countenance, the features of the once lovely Nancy Summers.

Though hackneyed in the ways of vice,

the conscience of Melburne was not wholly seared, and as he assisted to remove the unfortunate Nancy to a public-house, he mentally execrated himself as the primary cause of her sufferings.

She soon recovered her senses, but it was evident that she was in a dying state. Melburne sent instantly for medical aid; the physician declared that nothing could save, or even prolong her life. She was dying through cold and want of proper nourishment.

The sentence of his own own death would not at that moment have appalled Melburne so much. Hoping, however, that it was possible for the physician to be deceived, he hastily returned to Nancy, whom he found in the care of the landlady.

His enquiries of what had reduced her to such abject wretchedness, produced a discovery of Miss Sprotzler's guilt; since, as the cheque had been paid, there could not be a doubt that she had appropriated the money to her own use. Poor Nancy's

history, was, alas! that of too many other unfortunate women. She lived for some time in splendid wretchedness, on the wages of prostitution. The grief occasioned by the death of her child, who died when he was about two years old, brought on a settled dejection of spirits, to cure which she had recourse to the pernicious habit of dram-drinking; and she sunk by degrees lower and lower in the abyss of wretchedness and poverty, till she became the abject and forlorn being she was when Melburne recognized her.

She died in a few hours after she had related these particulars. Melburne had her decently interred, and for a short time the remembrance of her untimely fate prevented his plunging into his former excesses.

But his remorse soon subsided, and he became again the gay and successful Melburne, who considered the destruction of female innocence as a matter of triumph He soon learned to extenuate his own share in the fate of the unfortunate Nancy,

by throwing the whole blame upon Miss Sprotzler, whom he vowed to take severe vengeance upon if ever she fell in his way.

At the moment in which he recognized her in the jeweller's, his eye was caught by the extreme beauty of Cecilia, with whom he saw directly that Miss Sprotzler was upon familiar terms; and he waited till the ladies had quitted the shop, that he might learn who the charming girl was, with whom he felt more than half in love.

But when he found that the object of his admiration was Lady Cecilia Delmain, the rich heiress of whom he had so often heard, and that Miss Spotzler was her governess, he congratulated himself upon an opportunity of gaining, by good management, possession of a lovely woman, and an immense property.

He was punctual to the hour of appointment, and finding that Miss Sprotzler was ignorant of the fate of the unhappy Nancy, he worked so successfully upon her fears of a prosecution, that she threw herself upon her knees, and besought him

most earnestly to have mercy upon her; protesting at the same time that if he did not expose her, the money should be paid the next day.

But as the money was not Melburne's object, he relaxed by degrees, till he gave the governess to understand that not only the sum which she had made free with, but a much larger one would be secured to her, provided she should assist him in a project which he had in his head.

She readily promised to do whatever he required, and he then unfolded to her by degrees his plan of marrying Lady Cecilia.

Miss Sprotzler dreaded the rage of the Earl, if he discovered that she was implicated in the affair; but she dreaded still more the Bow-street officers, to whose care Melburne declared in very polite terms he should consign her if she hesitated.

In short, their iniquitous plan was soon settled. Miss Sprotzler was to receive one thousand pounds, and to retain besides

the five hundred which she had already in her possession, provided Mr. Melburne succeeded in espousing Lady Cecilia Delmain.

CHAPTER XIV.

The next thing to be considered was how the match could be brought about; and here the Machiavelian genius of Miss Sprotzler shone pre-eminent. She instructed Melburne in the weak side of Cecilia's character, and laid a plan of operations to ensnare the unsuspecting girl, through the romantic disposition of which she had herself been the occasion, by the injudicious course of reading she had permitted to her pupil.

The confederates parted mutually pleased, and in a few days afterwards the Earl's family set out for Belleville Lodge. They were followed by Melburne, who took a lodging at a farm-house in the neighbourhood of the Earl's seat. He changed his name, and affecting a wish to be incognito, he passed the chief part of his time in wandering about the beautiful rides and walks in the neighbourhood.

Neither the governess nor himself could settle how he was to be introduced to Cecilia. Miss Sprotzler wished for evident reasons to decline the office of bringing them acquainted, and Melburne himself was of opinion that from the romance of Cecilia's disposition, his chance of success would be better if their acquaintance was to commence apparently through accident.

Of success, indeed, he entertained little doubt; and when all circumstances are considered his vanity will not appear excessive. His person was uncommonly handsome, his manners in the highest degree graceful and insinuating; well skilled in all the weaknesses of the human heart, he was a very Proteus, who could assume whatever shape he thought most likely to secure his destined prey. What had poor Cecilia to oppose to the arts of this practised intriguer? Nothing, save innocence and credulity; for her naturally acute judgment and quick sense of right and wrong were completly warped by her education. Melburne surmised, and he was right, that she had already imaged in her

mind's eye a lover who should be a compound of all that in romance is termed amiable, and such a compound he determined to appear.

But while he was racking his brains for an opportunity to present himself as an Amadis de Gaul, or a Sir Charles Grandison, which ever he found most to the fair one's taste. Chance, or rather Cecilia's evil genius, presented him to her in a way the most likely to make an impression on a heart like her's.

She was extremely fond of walking .Miss Sprotzler had formerly often complained that her ladyship's taste for this vulgar exercise was a terrible annoyance to her; but she had now apparently vanquished her dislike to it; for as it was the Earl's wish she should always accompany his daughter, she encouraged rather than repressed Lady Cecilia's inclination to ramble about the country.

One morning the two ladies, followed by a servant, were strolling along the banks of a rivulet, while Carlo, the favourite spaniel of Lady Cecilia, bounded along before

them; sometimes running to a considerable distance, sometimes hastening back, recalled by the soft voice of his mistress. In the midst of his gambols, however, he approached too near the water, and the earth being soft on the banks of the rivulet, gave way, and he was precipitated into the stream.

Cecilia screamed in an agony of terror to the footman, to hasten to the rescue of her little favourite, who could not swim, and would certainly be drowned. But John prudently recollected that he could not swim either, and he replied, by an assurance " that he would run and find somebody to save the poor animal."

At that moment Melburne, who was walking unobserved a few paces behind the ladies, sprang forward, and hastily stripping off his coat plunged into the stream, which, to say the truth, was too shallow to be dangerous, and instantly reappeared with Carlo in his arms.

If any of my fair readers are learned in romance, they will readily suppose that this heroic action, to speak in Cecilia's

language, gained additional merit in her eyes from the manner in which Melburne disclaimed all thanks. Gallantly laying the dripping favourite at her feet, he declared that he had no merit in following an impulse which he could not resist; and as this speech might be supposed a little enigmatical, he explained it by a look so full of passionate admiration, that the abashed Cecilia cast down her eyes in visible confusion.

Melburne slipped on his coat, and spite of the ladies intreaties, that he would hasten home to change his clothes, he did not quit them till they were in sight of the Earl's house. During this short walk he contrived to fall in so adroitly with Cecilia's peculiarities, that he made more impression upon her imagination, than a man of sense, who would act without disguise, could have done in many months.

Though our fair visionary had for years employed herself in reading the adventures of other heroines, she had never before met with one herself; and immedi-

ately upon her return home she retired to her chamber, that she might reflect upon it at leisure.

After viewing the matter in every possible light, Lady Cecilia was convinced, that the stranger was a hero; his person, his manners, above all his humanity, (for poor Cecilia did not take into the account, that the stream was very shallow, and Melburne an excellent swimmer,) all made him appear in her eyes a being of superior order, and poor Wallenstein, whom she pictured to herself as the direct reverse of the amiable stranger, appeared doubly detestable in her eyes from the contrast she drew between them.

Melburne meantime had hastened to his lodgings, exulting in the fortunate chance which had procured him so favourable an introduction to our heroine, and determined to take every opportunity to improve the impression which he saw clearly the rescue of Carlo had made in his favour.

By the contrivance of Miss Sprotzler, Cecilia and he met frequently; but as it

was impossible for him to express in the presence of a third person those sentiments which he wished Cecilia to believe she had inspired, he contrived, under pretence of copying some songs for her, to draw her into a correspondence, the impropriety of which he glossed over, by confining himself to literary subjects, which were the avowed objects of the correspondents.

But by degrees the language of passion was permitted to mingle with the delicate flattery and sentimental declamation of his epistles: expressions were dropped which led Cecilia to believe that he had long adored her in silence. In short, a declaration of love was at last hazarded, which was made and received in all the form of ancient romance; for Cecilia's pernicious studies, though they had perverted her imagination, had not vitiated her heart. She was well enough pleased to receive the respectful homage of her admirer, but she thought that all Melburne had a right to expect, was to be told she did not hate him; and she supposed that,

if at the expiration of seven years, she was to give him even a distant hope of possessing her hand, he ought to esteem himself the most fortunate of men.

The girl must either have been a fool, or else the vainest of human beings, says one of my fair readers. Softly, softly, my dear madam; I must say, in defence of my poor heroine, that she was neither.

A few years experience of the realities of life, and a little good advice from a sensible female friend, was all that was wanting to render her as amiable as she was lovely.

My readers will readily believe, that Melburne meant to take his measures much more expeditiously than Cecilia had any idea of; but he saw clearly that Cecilia's innate delicacy would render her, in spite of the dictates of romance, by no means so easy a conquest as he had in the first instance hoped and expected to find her.

He had ventured to solicit the indulgence of sometimes seeing her in private, but he was refused with a steadiness, and

indeed with a degree of displeasure which he had not expected; and he found a coldness in her manners, after he had proposed a meeting, which he saw would require both art and time to remove. His feigned penitence, however, obtained his pardon; and an event soon occurred which promised to throw Cecilia wholly into his power.

This was the expected arrival in England of young Wallenstein. Madame Weimar had at length paid the debt of nature, and a few weeks more would bring Frederic to the Earl's London residence, where the family were to meet him.

CHAPTER XV.

The Earl announced this news to his daughter in a manner which proved that he expected her to hear it with pleasure: what then was his surprise to see her burst into tears, and her countenance assume every appearance of anguish.

The Earl sternly enquired the reason of her agitation; but no words can do justice to his vexation and astonishment, when she avowed it proceeded from the intimation which he had just given her of the arrival of Frederic, to whom she declared it was her firm intention never to suffer herself to be sacrificed.

Instead of demanding, with temper and good sense, what objections she could rationally form to a youth whom she had never seen, the Earl flew at once into a violent rage; reproached his daughter for the undutiful return which she made to

the indulgence with which he had always treated her, and declared that she should be the wife of young Wallenstein, or that he would renounce her for ever.

Cecilia was prepared for violence on the part of her father; but she had not expected that he would carry his displeasure to such a height; she was shocked at the threat he threw out, of bestowing his malediction upon her, if she refused to marry the man whom he had chosen for her husband.

Miss Sprotzler rejoiced in the favourable opportunity which the *fracas* between the Earl and Lady Cecilia would afford to Melburne, to carry his designs into execution. She had hitherto avoided taking any decided part in his favour; but now she affected to be thrown off her guard by the evident distress of Cecilia; and for the first time she inveighed with bitterness against what she termed the absurd whim of the Earl, in forming such an engagement, without consulting the inclinations of his daughter.

Cecilia, although in her heart she per-

fectly coincided in opinion with Miss Sprotzler, had yet self-command enough to forbear expressing her sentiments. She was resolute however in one point, that of never becoming the wife of Wallenstein. It was in vain that Miss Sprotzler talked of the violent measures which the Earl was likely to adopt, that he might even use force to accomplish his purpose. Cecilia was too much of a heroine to doubt that she should ultimately triumph over all the persecutions of her father, and the detestable Baron. In one point only she was vulnerable. She could not think without shuddering of incurring her father's malediction; even the misery of an union with Wallenstein appeared light in comparison with this dreaded evil; but she endeavoured to persuade herself that it was impossible her fath e could as long as she remained single, put his threat into execution.

Miss Sprotzler saw that Melburne's cause was lost, unless he carried the heiress by a *coup de main;* and she had so often disposed, in idea, of the thousand guineas which

she was to have for assisting him, that she could not bear the thought of seeing it thus as it were snatched from her grasp. She resolved, therefore, to hazard a step which she had hitherto avoided, and to introduce Melburne to plead his own cause. She knew that she could manage matters so as to prevent the interview from being discovered by the servants; and she trusted to the generosity of Cecilia not to betray her to the Earl.

One of the apartments appropriated to Lady Cecilia, had a door that opened to the garden Melburne, disguised as a countryman, came to Belleville Lodge with a letter for Miss Sprotzler, who pretending a wish to question him, desired that he might be shewn into this room. She had previously taken care to draw Cecilia thither, and before her pupil suspected who the pretended countryman was Miss Sprotzler slipped out and left them alone together.

Conscious that all his hopes rested upon the issue of this interview, Melburne used all his arts to persuade Cecilia into

an elopement. He affected, while he painted his own sufferings in the most glowing colours, to make light of them in comparison with his fears for her future happiness. He protested that although in resigning her, he must for ever bid farewell to earthly felicity, he was ready to do so if he could be certain that her peace would be secured by the sacrifice; but he could not prevail upon himself passively to surrender her to a fate, which must, he feared, be a wretched one.

Cecilia's flowing tears bore witness that she participated in his fears; but spite of the pains which he took to alarm her, by representing the probability of her being forced into a marriage, she continued to reject what he called the only means of avoiding it, and declared that nothing should induce her to consent to an elopement.

Melburne fancied that her voice as she made this declaration was not very steady, and hoping every thing from another interview, he suffered Miss Sprotzler to hurry him away.

The artful governess found little difficulty in apologizing to her pupil, for the part she had taken in procuring Melburne an interview with her. She saw with satisfaction that he had succeeded in raising a conflict in the mind of Cecilia, which promised to terminate in a manner favourable to the success of their vile plan.

She was not deceived. The persuasions of Melburne, aided by the harshness with which the Earl continued to treat his daughter, drew from Cecilia a reluctant consent to become the wife of Melburne; but sensations even to herself indefinable made her hesitate to name a time for flying with him from the house of her father.

The unhappiness which our heroine had experienced before she gave her consent to this step, was nothing to what she felt when her fate was as she conceived decided. Her heart seemed sinking under an oppression, which she vainly tried to shake off, by repeating to herself the sophistry of her lover, and Miss Sprotzler. The resentment with which her father's conduct had inspired her, was subdued

by the thought that she was about to quit his house, never, perhaps, to return to it; and so strong an impression did this idea make upon her mind, that she thought more than once of writing to desire Melburne would release her from her promise.

She was prevented, however, from doing so, partly by a fear of the effect which such a proceeding would have upon him; partly from the shame she felt at the thought of appearing so childishly capricious; and principally from the dread, that if she continued obstinate in refusing the hand of Wallenstein, her father in his rage might pour upon her the threatened malediction: a circumstance which she thought less likely to happen in her absence, than if she remained and continued obstinate in her refusal.

CHAPTER XVI.

The young Baron was now every day expected, and the Earl determined to give him the meeting in London. This circumstance obliged Cecilia to fix a time for their departure. Miss Sprotzler was to be the companion of her flight, and every thing was arranged for its taking place the night following.

Lady Cecilia had for a short time observed that Philips, who still continued about her person, seemed in very low spirits. She had more than once interrogated her as to the cause, but she always received some evasive answer. On the morning of the day in which the elopement was to take place, when Philips attended to dress her lady, her eyes were swelled with weeping, and her whole appearance was so disconsolate, that Cecilia, who was much attached to her, begged of

her with great tenderness to reveal the cause of her grief.

Philips tried to speak, but burst into tears. "Compose yourself, my good Philips," said Cecilia, taking her hand; "you know that neither my father nor I, are insensible of your worth; and if your distress springs from any cause which we can remove, you shall not suffer long. Perhaps your brother has been unfortunate in his business; but don't let that disturb you. I am very rich now, Philips; I have not laid out any money for some time, and you are welcome to my whole stock."

"Oh, my dear young lady!" cried Philips, "I wish to God it was the concerns of my own family that distresses me; but, alas! it is for you yourself, that my heart is breaking."

"For me!" cried Cecilia, with surprise.

"Yes, Lady Cecilia, for you, who, poor betrayed innocent, are about to become the dupe of a monster."

The idea that her meditated flight was

discovered, blanched the cheek of Cecilia for an instant, but in the next her indignation at the word dupe, caused her neck and face to glow with the deepest crimson.

"I know not," cried she, with an air of *hauteur*, "how I have deserved this appellation, nor why you so far forget the deference due to me, as to presume to use it."

"I trust, Lady Cecilia," cried Philips, "that although I have loved you from the moment of your birth as if you were my own, I have never forgotten the respect due to the daughter of my sainted mistress: you were too young when she died to recollect what I am about to mention, and I would not, under other circumstances, presume to remind you of it; but almost the last act of the late Countess, was to place you in my arms, with a strict charge that I should love and cherish you for her sake."

"And you have fulfilled my dear mother's last wishes; you have indeed, Philips," cried the subdued Cecilia, throwing herself into the arms of the faithful do-

mestic; "and even if my future misery should be the consequence of your betraying my secret, I shall always recollect your tender care of my infancy."

An *éclaircissement* now ensued. Philips acknowledged, that finding Miss Sprotzler had private meetings with Melburne, whose apparently accidental rencontres with Lady Cecilia and her governess, she had heard of from the footman who followed them in their walks; she had been tempted to watch Miss Sprotzler, who remained for some time in an arbour in the garden with Melburne on the night when she introduced him to the apartment of Cecilia. Their conversation was carried on in so low a tone that Philips could only catch the name of Cecilia, which was many times repeated, and that of Melburne, by which she distinctly heard Miss Sprotzler address him. Philips was no stranger either to the character or person of Melburne, who was notorious for his libertinism, and she watched for his leaving the arbour in the hope of ascertaining whether he was the person she

suspected, but she could not approach him near enough to ascertain it without being seen. Unwilling to alarm Lady Cecilia, till she was sure that her fears were well founded, she deferred her disclosure till she was convinced both that he was the person she suspected, and that Miss Sprotzler and he were in league to carry off Lady Cecilia.

Philips now painted with equal truth and force of colouring, the infamous character of Melburne, of whose profligacy she related more than one instance, which had come to her own knowledge. " But I do not ask you, my dearest Lady Cecilia," cried she, " to take his character upon my word; give yourself but time to enquire into his pursuits, and you will be convinced that I have not exaggerated his faults."

Cecilia was too much stunned to reply. Her preference for Melburne was grounded upon a belief that he possessed every virtue, and to find him thus degraded, even below the ordinary class of mortals, was a severe wound both to her heart and her

pride. Yet might not Philips herself be prejudiced, or misinformed.

This idea gave momentary ease to Cecilia's oppressed heart; but she speedily recollected that it was absolutely impossible for either prejudice or misrepresentation, to depict him in colours so black without some ground, and if there was any the least shadow of truth in what she had just heard, how different, how widely different must he be, to what she had believed him; what studied art, what consummate duplicity must he have used to veil his real character and sentiments, under the semblance of the most exalted qualities.

Cecilia's first impulse was to write and inform Melburne of the reasons which induced her to renounce him for ever; but, through the prudent advice of Philips this step was declined, and she contented herself with giving a verbal explanation of the cause which induced her to change her sentiments to Miss Sprotzler, who could not conceal her chagrin when she found the golden harvest she expected to reap thus suddenly blasted. She had art enough,

however, to refrain from openly siding with Melburne, whom she contented herself with hoping was falsely accused, and she promised to convey the mortifying intelligence to him before the hour appointed for the elopement.

It would be a vain attempt to paint the chaos of Cecilia's mind, tortured as it was by a mixture of self-condemnation for her own credulity, and regret for the unworthiness of one who had gained a much stronger hold on her heart than she was aware of. It was with her, as it was with all youthful enthusiasts, happiness was in her opinion annihilated for ever, by this first disappointment, and she was almost inclined to submit without farther struggle, to the fate that awaited her.

CHAPTER XVII.

A CIRCUMSTANCE occurred the next day which roused her from this state of sullen indifference.

As she was going up stairs she perceived an open letter crumpled together, and stooping to pick it up, her own name caught her eye with a threat of vengeance added to it, which shocked and alarmed her. She was positive that the handwriting was that of Melburne; and she tottered to her chamber, where, in an agony of mingled terror and indignation, she perused the scrawl which was as follows:

"Don't tell me of your sorrow and regret; you must have been infernally stupid not to swear point blank, that every thing said against me was false, and the officious informer in the pay of the Earl. The little romantic chit, would have swallowed any

story, however improbable, if you had but told it with an imposing air, and mingled a sufficient number of protestations of your inviolable regard and attachment to her.

"'Sdeath! when I think what a cursed fool I have been made of, I could find in my heart to pistol both you and myself. By Heaven! that little squeamish prude, Cecilia, shall not escape my vengeance! shall not triumph in thus jilting with impunity a man whom none of her sex ever yet escaped, if he chose to mark them for his prey.

"And what after all has she to complain of? I would have made her as they call it honourably mine, and I will still make her so, spite of her insolent disdain. Yet lovely as she is, matrimony will be a bitter pill to my free spirit; and one that Venus herself could not tempt me to swallow, were it less palatably gilded; but the Delmain estate is too valuable a prize to be thus suffered to slip through one's fingers, even in the very moment too, in which I reckoned it securely my own.

"I am now incapable of forming a plan,

but in a few hours I shall conquer my vexation so far as to arrange one: and remember, if you expect to be left in peaceable possession of poor Nancy's five hundred, you *must* assist me, aye, and cheerfully too: I will not be plagued with your fears of discovery, and your dread of the Earl's dismissing you ignominiously. You never can be half so much in his power, as you are in mine; and if I lose Cecilia, my rage must have vent on some one or other; so, beware."

"And this is the man whom I have loved and trusted!" exclaimed the horror-struck Cecilia, when she had perused the vile scrawl. "Oh! how can I ever be sufficiently thankful to Providence for saving me from the miseries of a union with such a wretch!"

A more bitter feeling than mortification now oppressed the heart of Cecilia. She recollected how tenderly indulgent the Earl had, except in one instance, ever been; how fondly he doated upon her, and that even his peremptory desire to see her the wife of Baron Wallenstein, arose from

a belief that the marriage would secure her felicity. The proof which she had just given of the fallibility of her own judgment, rendered her more lenient to what she supposed the error of the Earl's; and for the first time, she wished that it was possible for her to look on Wallenstein with a favourable eye.

Spite of her new born sense of filial duty, however, her repugnance to the match remained unaltered. She was revolving the subject in her mind, when the voice of Miss Sprotzler roused her to a sense of the necessity there was for her speedily deciding how to act with her perfidious governess.

She soon took her resolution. She sent for Miss Sprotzler, who entered with a countenance of terror, for she had been for some hours seeking the letter, which her fears had already suggested that Cecilia had found. But when her pupil with an air of grave displeasure held it out to her, she was so wholly overcome by shame and fear, that she was near fainting, and throwing herself at Cecilia's feet, she begged of

her, in the most abject terms, to be merciful, and not expose her to the Earl.

"On one condition," said Cecila, "I will be so; that condition is, that you instantly find some excuse for quitting our house, and that you never apply to my father for a recommendation to another situation. Culpable as your conduct has been, I would fain hope that you are not wholly lost to all sense of shame or remorse; and I am willing to supply you with the decent necessaries of life, as long as I am assured that the money I may bestow is employed in the support of a penitent, not of an incorrigible votary of vice."

The artful governess saw her cue, and she seized it with so much skill and cleverness, that Cecilia parted from her, assured that her return to the paths of rectitude was sincere, and would be lasting. Miss Sprotzler managed so well with the Earl, that he was persuaded the dangerous illness of a relation required her presence in Germany, and he assented with

regret to her leaving his family as soon as they arrived in London.

For London they accordingly set out, and for the first time Cecilia approached it with feelings of dread, for she expected to meet the formidable Wallenstein; it was in vain that she strove to picture him to herself such as the faithful Philips, who never lost an opportunity to plead his cause, declared his father to have been; but all her early conceived prepossessions against Germany and its inhabitants rose in array against poor Wallenstein, and she found it impossible to combat with them.

CHAPTER XVIII.

At length the so much dreaded visitor arrived, and to the great astonishment of Cecilia, she was not summoned to receive him. He reached Grosvenor-square, about an hour after the family had breakfasted, and was engaged with Lord George and the Earl for nearly two hours. He then retired to his chamber, to take some repose, and Lord George came up to Cecilia's dressing-room,

"Well, my dear niece," cried he, with forced cheerfulness, "our young stranger has reached England at last; but the poor fellow seems to have suffered much by his attendance upon Madame Wiemar; who really had a great deal to answer for to suffer him to devote himself to her as he has done. You must not expect to see an Adonis, so prepare yourself to look with an indulgent eye upon our young friend, who

will doubtless soon profit by his removal from total solitude to elegant society."

Cecilia conjectured from this speech, and from the chagrin which in spite of his endeavours to conceal it clouded the features of Lord George, that he was not much prepossessed in favour of the young Baron, and as she had much reliance upon the judgment of her uncle, of whom she was very fond, that idea tended to prepossess her still more against Wallenstein.

At length the dinner hour arrived, and with a beating heart, and cheeks covered with blushes, Cecilia suffered her uncle to hand her into the dining room; but she had nearly ran out of it again, when the Earl taking the hand of a sallow, aukward, sickly-looking stripling, introduced him to her as Baron Wallenstein.

Cecilia actually started, and if ever she appeared ungraceful, it was at that moment; so totally had surprise robbed her of the small share of self-possession which she had called up on entering the room.

Her confusion, however, passed unnoticed both by the Earl and Lord George,

who were taken up in observing the effect which her appearance produced on Wallenstein. They perceived that her deep blush was a feeble tint compared to the bright crimson which glowed in his sallow cheek, while he fixed his large dark eyes upon her with an expression in them, which they could not define, although it was evident that admiration was predominant.

The glance, however, was but momentary, he quickly dropped his eyes, nor did he during the whole time of dinner again venture to raise them.

The Earl and Lord George endeavoured to make the conversation general, but they could extract only monosyllables from Cecilia, and little more from Wallenstein. They observed, however, that he spoke English well, and the little that he did say was to the purpose: but he appeared to have even more than his share of German phlegm, and his cold and even apathetic manner provoked Lord George exceedingly.

The Earl had undertaken to act the

agreeable host, a character, to say the truth, for which nature had not altogether cut him out; and which it never cost him so much pains as on that day to maintain. He tried to persuade himself that he was happy; he even tried to believe, and in this there was something more than fancy, that he could trace in the features of Wallenstein, some resemblance to those of his deceased father. But he was almost compelled to believe that this slight likeness extended no farther than the features, not a trait of the [illegible]k interesting, animated Wallenstein, to whom he was indebted for his life, could he trace in the silent, aukward, apathetic being before him; and when he glanced at his sickly skeleton figure, he could not but acknowledge that he was every way an unfit match for his lovely, animated daughter.

Cecilia retired as soon as she could after dinner, nor did she appear again during the evening: a violent head ache was her excuse for not joining the gentlemen; but the truth was, that astonishment and dis-

may so completely overwhelmed her, that she wished, if possible, to have time to tranquillize her spirits, before she met her father in the morning, for she was resolved to have an interview with him on the subject of her intended marriage without delay.

She repeated to herself a hundred times, that her father must be shocked and surprised to find the young Baron so destitute of every advantage both of person and manner; and that it was impossible he could suppose she would unite herself to the odious being; but her heart sunk at the recollection of her father's obstinacy, and of the length of time which he had cherished this darling project.

While Lady Cecilia, too much agitated to sit still, was pacing her chamber, endeavouring to compose an address sufficiently pathetic to soften the heart of Lord Delmain, the three gentlemen were passing what seemed to each of the party an everlasting evening. The more Lord George saw of Wallenstein, the more indignant he felt at the thought of his

niece being sacrificed to him. He perceived the Earl look at him oftener than once with an air of disapprobation, and he resolved to make an effort to avert his niece's fate.

Frederic had no sooner retired for the night, than the Earl, with a deep sigh, and a rueful air, observed to his brother, that Madame Weimar had been the destruction of the young man.

"I don't know that," answered Lord George.

"Not know; why, zounds! it is evident enough. I think he is the most aukward, stupid booby I ever saw in my life."

"My dear brother, you speak like an oracle."

"Like an oracle indeed! Are you mad, George? or do you want to put me in a passion? One would really believe that you were glad to find things had turned out so contrary to my hopes and wishes."

"On the contrary I sympathize sincerely in your disappointment: for I conclude that you see the impossibility of giving my niece to this young fellow."

"Impossibility!" epeated the Earl, doubtingly.

"Certainly, for you never could think of sacrificing her in so barbarous a manner."

The Earl fixed his eyes upon Lord George, and remained for some minutes without speaking. He recollected that Lord George had never appeared cordially to rejoice in the intended union, and he fancied that he secretly exulted in Wallenstein's turning out so different a character to what they had expected. He was angry, also, that Lord George should so openly express his certainty, that the match would be broken off, because he thought that this certainty was expressed with a view to dictate to him. These reflections were not very favourable to the interest of Cecilia, and he expressed, in a sullen tone, his surprise that his brother should conceive that the match would be broken off.

This speech threw Lord George completely off his guard, and he answered,

with some asperity, " My opinion, brother, proceeded from my thinking that you would not sacrifice the happiness of your daughter, to the gratification of your own whim."

" Do you call my engagement with the late Baron Wallenstein a whim?"

" Without discussing the rationality of it in the first instance, you surely cannot think yourself bound by it, now that you see the intended husband of your daughter is so totally different to what you expected to find him."

" You are in a great hurry, methinks, to make this discovery. How do you know what the boy may turn out in a year or two hence?"

" I see little or no prospect of his ever turning out good for any thing; and I am sure poor Cecilia regards him with the greatest aversion."

" Has she then already expressed her sentiments to you?"

" Her countenance expresses them very plainly."

This speech threw the Earl into a com-

plete fury, for he directly suspected that Lady Cecilia and her uncle were leagued against Wallenstein; and, consequently, that they resolved to set his authority at defiance. All the objections which his good sense, and his love for Cecilia had raised to her union with the Baron, now gave place to his desire of proving that he would be absolute; and he vehemently protested, that if Cecilia did not become the wife of Wallenstein, he would renounce her for ever.

Sensible, too late, of the error which he had committed, in exasperating when he ought to have soothed his brother's foible, Lord George forbore saying any thing more on the subject. He comforted himself with the thought that the marriage could not possibly take place immediately, and that when the Earl reflected coolly upon the subject, he would scarcely carry his love of contradiction so far as to sacrifice Cecilia to a stupid blockhead, which he felt almost assured Wallenstein would turn out to be.

The candid part of our readers will

justly blame Lord George for deciding so hastily on the character of the young Baron, but in justice to him, we must observe, that Frederic's defects did not appear to be of a nature that would yield to time; and Lord George was right in thinking that he must be altered indeed, before it would be possible for a girl like Cecilia to look at him without aversion.

CHAPTER XIX.

The next morning Cecilia sought a private audience of her father, the subject of which our readers have probably anticipated; but she found the Earl not only adverse to release her from her engagement to Wallenstein, but perfectly furious at her proposing such a measure.

Though shocked and terrified at his vehemence, Cecilia had too much at stake to be easily rebuffed; and when he insisted in the most positive terms, on her pledging her honour to become the wife of Wallenstein, she resolutely refused.

Excess of passion appeared to choak the Earl's utterance: his face became livid and distorted. Cecilia, terrified at his violence, turned to quit the room, but just as she did so, she perceived him fall back in his chait, and a torrent of blood gushed from his mouth.

The screams of Cecilia brought up the domestics, and the family surgeon was instantly sent for. No words can describe the anguish of our poor heroine, who, nearly frantic with grief and self-reproach, exclaimed repeatedly that she had murdered her father.

Neither Wallenstein nor Lord George were present at this scene. It happened that the former was gone out for the day, and his servants knew not whither. As to the latter, he was not thought of in the general bustle.

Cecilia's raptures were unbounded, when the surgeon pronounced, that although the Earl had broken a blood vessel, there did not seem to be any actual danger, provided he was not agitated. She petitioned so earnestly to be suffered to remain in his apartment, that the surgeon consented.

When her first emotion of thankfulness to Providence for having saved her from the guilt of parricide had subsided, she began to consider in what way she could, without agitating her father, intimate to him her resolution of conforming entirely

to his will. In the present elevated state of her feelings, the sacrifice of her own happiness seemed trifling in comparison with a single moment of peace to her father.

Wallenstein had returned, and appeared greatly shocked when he had learned what had happened to the Earl; fearful of agitating him, he did not venture to approach his apartment, but he sent every half hour to know how he went on.

Towards evening he asked Philips, in a very low voice, where was his daughter: and finding that she was in the room, desired that she would come to him. Cecilia put aside the curtain with a trembling hand, and threw herself on her knees by the bed-side. "Oh my father!" cried she, "can you forgive your penitent child? She will have in future no will but yours."

The Earl's countenance softened. "Then you no longer refuse the hand of Wallenstein?" said he.

"I am ready to plight my faith to him this moment."

"My own Cecilia! my good child!" said he, but in an accent so faint that his daughter, fearing she had done wrong, begged he would compose himself, and retreated from his bed side.

Eleven at night brought Lord George, full of alarm at the account which he had just received of his brother's alarming accident. He found the Earl better than he had expected, but he was shocked at the appearance of his niece. He drew her gently from the apartment of the Earl, and began to console her with the hope that he would soon be perfectly recovered. "God grant it, my dear uncle!" cried Cecilia, bursting into tears, "for if he does not, I shall be a wretch indeed!"

She now related to Lord George the whole of what had passed. He was shocked to think that his brother's ungoverned temper had so nearly cost him his life; but though he felt all the merit of the sacrifice which Lady Cecilia had voluntarily offered to make, he fervently hoped that some circumstance would occur to liberate her from her promise.

Prepossessed as he was against young Wallenstein, he could not help being equally surprised and pleased at the interest which the young man appeared to take in the recovery of the Earl, to whose apartment he was admitted on the following day. Cecilia almost shuddered as he approached to congratulate her on the prospect of her father's recovery; but she recollected the promise she had given, and she endeavoured to conceal her agitation.

The Earl recovered rapidly, and the appearance of feeling which his danger had produced in Frederic again gave place to gloom and apathy. Cecilia's mind, now freed from all fear for her father, had leisure to revert to her own situation; but so miserable did her prospects appear, that she dared not trust herself to contemplate them.

The Earl soon found, that however deficient, our young German was in the graces, the solid part of his education was complete. His preceptor, a man of learning and science, had succeeded in making him a good classical scholar, and had given

him, besides, a competent knowledge of general literature; but his invincible reserve prevented the Earl or Lord George from being able to ascertain whether these acquirements were the effect of great industry, and a very ordinary capacity; or whether he was assisted by any portion of natural genius.

The Earl's habits and pursuits detached him in a great measure from society; but of the few acquaintances whom he retained after the death of the Countess, Lady Westbrook was the one he valued most. She was fixed upon to introduce Lady Cecilia at court, and to *chaperon* her as soon as she was of an age to be introduced into the world. In the mean time, as her education was finished, the Earl wished to re-place Miss Sprotzler by a lady who would be a companion rather than a governess to her; and Lady Westbrook undertook to provide a person in all respects unexceptionable.

The report of Cecilia's engagement to young Wallenstein was soon spread; but

as the nuptials were not to take place till he had completed his twentieth year, and he was little more than eighteen, more than one dashing sprig of nobility resolved to contend with him for the possession of her hand; and Lady Westbrook being known to visit the young heiress, she was often teized with questions, whether Lady Cecilia really was as lovely as report proclaimed her.

Her ladyship, who was very partial to our heroine, did ample justice to her merits; but she secretly lamented both the connexion the Earl had formed for her, and the erroneous education which she had received. She resolved to endeavour to find a person who would be capable of leading her by degrees from the day-dreams of romance, to the realities of life, and of giving her just ideas both of human nature, and of her own duties as an accountable being.

Before her ladyship could put her benevolent plan in execution, an event happened, which plunged poor Cecilia in the

deepest affliction. The Earl caught a very severe cold for which he obstinately refused to have advice, and it was soon evident to every one that he was in a rapid decline.

CHAPTER XX.

He was not insensible to his danger, but it had not the effect which Lord George hoped and expected, of making him abandon the proposed union; on the contrary, he seemed more desirous of it than ever. One day, when Cecilia was congratulating herself on his apparent amendment, he said to her, "I really believe, my child, that anxiety about your future destiny augments my disorder. I sometimes fancy that if I could once see you the wife of Wallenstein I should soon recover."

"If you think so, my dear father," cried Cecilia, "I am ready to become his when you please."

Just as she uttered these words, Wallenstein entered, and the Earl exclaimed: "You are come in good time, Frederic, to recieve the consent of Cecilia

to your immediate union. I am certain that I shall be better when once it takes place, and we will procure a special licence directly."

Frederic's German phlegm vanished, the liveliest joy animated his features, and he clasped the hand of Cecilia in both his with an exclamation of delight; but the icy coldness of her touch, and the livid paleness of her cheek checked his transports in a moment. He dropped her hand abruptly, and began a confused and hesitating speech, of which little more was intelligible than that he could wish Lady Cecilia not to be hurried.

But the Earl was too elated at his daughter's unexpected acquiescence to regard the speech of Wallenstein. Lord George was immediately summoned, his surprise and concern were equally great, but the state of the Earl's health imposed silence upon him. The special licence was procured in a few hours, and that very evening the nuptials were solemnized.

Lady Westbrook, Lord George, and the

Earl were the only witnesses of this inauspicious marriage. Cecilia supported herself during the ceremony with more firmness than her friends had expected, but it was the firmness of despair; but when all was over, when she saw her fate irrevocably fixed, a long fainting fit seriously alarmed her friends for her life.

It is probable that at that moment the Earl felt some twinges of conscience for the precipitancy with which he had concluded the marriage; but the evident alarm of Wallenstein, and the sensibility which he displayed, reconciled him in a great measure to himself.

When Cecilia recovered, she struggled to disguise her feelings, and she felt the cruel sacrifice which she had just made, recompensed in some degree by the visible effect which it produced upon the spirits of her father, which were higher than she recollected ever to have seen them. He looked so much better than he had done since the commencement of his illness, that Cecilia, as she gazed upon him, fancied that his recovery was not only probable, but certain; but just as he was in the midst

of a cheerful speech, he changed colour and fell back upon the sopha. Cecilia flew to him in terror, she stooped to support him in her arms; his head dropped upon her shoulder, and faintly murmuring a blessing upon her, he expired.

It was fortunate for our heroine, that at a crisis so afflicting, she had the support of her uncle and Lady Westbrook; both of whom endeavoured, by every means that friendship and affection could devise, to console her for her father's death. As to Wallenstein, she intreated to be spared for some time the sight of him; and as their marriage was not even known to any of the domestics but Philips, Lord George thought that it would be better, on many accounts, for the Baron to take up his residence with him, and he accordingly removed to his lordship's lodgings.

A number of little circumstances tended to remove in part the prejudice which Lord George had at first conceived against Wallenstein. The feeling which he had shewn from time to time, although it merely beamed for a moment, and was

then lost in sullen reserve, impressed him with a belief that the young German's heart was good. But in the few weeks which he had spent in London, he did not appear to have lost any part of either his aukwardness, or apathetic shyness; and Lord George could not think, without a sigh, of his lovely niece being united to him.

Nevertheless as the marriage had actually taken place, Lord George wished the young couple should form their plans for the future as soon as possible, and he felt rather alarmed when nearly a month had elapsed, and Cecilia under one pretence or other had constantly declined seeing the Baron. He was conscious that Wallenstein must think this very strange, although he had never expressed a single syllable on the subject. Determined to represent to his niece, as forcibly as he could, the necessity of her receiving the Baron immediately, he hastened to her. He found her in tears, but at sight of him she tried to look cheerful, and when he began to speak of the purport of his visit, she

hastily interrupted him with a declaration that she had just written to the Baron.

"I trust, my dear niece, it is to summon him to an interview."

The Countess, as we must now call her, evaded this question, and Lady Westbrook just then entering the room, the conversation took another turn.

Lady Westbrook had remained with Cecilia from the time of the Earl's death, and she proposed to do so till her marriage was publicly avowed, which she did not suppose it would be for some time. She agreed, however, in opinion with Lord George, that it was high time for Cecilia to admit Wallenstein to her presence.

Lord George took his leave earlier than he had intended, for he was anxious to know the purport of his niece's letter to the Baron. Wallenstein was in his chamber on his lordship's return, and on being told that Lord George desired to see him, he sent word that he was indisposed and just going to bed. "Well, thought Lord George, I must wait till morning; but when the Baron received as usual a

summons to the breakfast-table, he was not in his apartment, his trunks were missing, and his servant was also absent.

This intelligence alarmed Lord George exceedingly. He hastened to the apartment in hopes of discovering some clue to the mysterious disappearance of Frederic. The drawers which had contained his clothes and linen were open, and in one of them he found the following letter, addressed to himself.

"By the time this reaches your lordship, I shall be on my way to my own country. I have learned, alas! too late, that in his too great zeal for my happiness, my deceased friend has sacrificed that of his daughter; but deeply as I deplore the precipitancy of our marriage, I cannot consider the Countess's fate as decided by it. A marriage, which has taken place under such circumstances, and which has never been consummated, may I conceive easily be annulled. Nothing on my part shall be wanting to forward such a measure; and I beseech you, my Lord, to impress

the necessity of it upon the mind of the Countess. Neither time nor circumstances can ever reunite us, and formed as she is to bless and be blessed in the wedded state, why should she even in the very morning of her life pine in celibacy?

"I came into your country, my Lord, prejudiced against it, and its inhabitants; perhaps these prejudices are not entirely removed, but I am neither insensible of, nor ungrateful for the kindness I have received from your deceased brother and yourself; a kindness, which will ever be indelibly impressed upon the heart of

"Frederic de Wallenstein."

"By Heaven!" exclaimed Lord George, upon reading this letter, "he is a worthy fellow after all! but he must not be suffered to go, Cecilia must recall him," and he hastened to shew his niece the Baron's letter.

Neither his persuasions nor even intreaties could soften her in favour of the voluntary exile, although she steadily rejected every idea of endeavouring to

annul the marriage. The natural good temper of Lord George was not proof, to what he considered an excess of perverseness, and he quitted his niece for the first time in serious displeasure.

The feelings of Cecilia herself were of a mixed kind, joy for what she considered as a deliverance from an insupportable union was predominant, but fully sensible of thegenerosity of Wallenstein, she deeply regretted that she was obliged to purchase peace by a step wounding to his pride, and, she suspected, afflicting to his heart.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE following letters will sufficiently elucidate his motives for the step which he had taken.

To the Baron de Wallenstein.

Sir,

"Situated as we are, you have, I fear, and with reason, accused me of unkindness or caprice, in so long secluding myself from your sight. I can only apologize for my conduct, by avowing that I could not bring myself to see you, till I had summoned resolution to reveal to you the secret cause which impelled me to consent to our union.

"Accustomed as you know I had always been to regard you as my destined husband, you may, perhaps, suppose that I was early prepossessed in your favour. Such, however, was not the case, circum-

cumstances in themselves perhaps trifling early prejudiced me against your nation, and I regarded my engagement to yourself, as an unjustifiable stretch of parental power, which I was determined, at every hazard, to resist.

"No sooner did you arrive in England, than I revealed to my father my repugnance to the match, and my resolution never to be yours. To this unfortunate declaration of mine was owing the dreadful accident which alarmed us for his life; and the horrible idea that I had nearly become a parricide, made me eagerly and voluntarily assure the Earl of my entire acquiescence in his wishes.

"Were it possible for us to dictate to our hearts, believe me, Baron, you should have no cause to complain of my want of duty or affection. But, alas! the heart will not be controlled; and mine, spite of my wishes to mould it to the will of my deceased father, shrinks from any connexion with you more tender than friendship.

"Will you then, Baron, agree to the only

terms upon which we can live together? Will you agree to our residing under the same roof as brother and sister, not as man and wife? And will you pardon me if I say that it is only upon this condition that I can yield to our residing in the same house?

"Should these conditions be such as you cannot grant, I expect from your justice a moderate allowance out of my fortune, and the liberty of residing at one of my late father's country seats; and pardon me if I add, that this will perhaps be a measure more conducive to the comfort of us both than the one I proposed first.

"Adieu, Baron! believe me that it is not the last of my sorrows to be compelled to afflict one whom my father regarded as a son. By the memory of that dear lost parent, I conjure you to forgive and pity the unfortunate

Cecilia Delmain."

To the Countess of Delmain.

Madam,

"You will pardon my not having given

you an immediate answer, when I tell you that my silence has proceeded from my desire to hasten the completion of your wishes. I have arranged every thing for my departure: in a few hours I shall be on my road to Germany, where I shall await your commands.

"You will consult, madam, with your friends on the best measures to obtain the dissolution of our union. I shall forward your wishes in that respect by every means in my power, and I hope you will soon be freed from fetters, which, had I suspected your insurmountable dislike to me, you should never have worn.

"Whether this event, so necessary to the peace of us both, should take place or not, I beg that you will believe my solemn assurances that I will never, in any manner directly or indirectly enforce any claim which the laws of your country may give me upon you.

"With respect to your fortune I beg you will consider it wholly at your own disposal: no consideration could induce me to accept any part of it.

"I shall always regret that my want of penetration, and the cruel restraint imposed upon you, madam, should have exposed you to a situation so wounding to your feelings. That you may be speedily released from an engagement so repugnant to them, is, madam, the sincere wish of

De Wallenstien."

Lady Westbrook and Cecilia differed materially in the judgment which they formed of the letter we have just given to our readers. Her ladyship thought that there was an air of proud regret visible in it, which proved that Wallenstein's heart had suffered as much as his pride. To this Cecilia would not agree; she declared that she had little doubt Wallenstein was actuated entirely by duty, and probably felt as little reluctance as she did herself to a separation. But she was fully sensible of the generosity which induced him, moderate as his fortune was, to resign all claim upon hers. She knew that it was a wish to enrich the family of Wallenstein,

in the first instance, which had rendered her deceased father so anxious for the match, and she determined that in that respect at least, the will of the deceased Earl should be faithfully fulfilled.

CHAPTER XXII.

LORD George fully agreed with his niece in the justice of this procedure, and both wrote in the most kind terms to Wallenstein on the subject. Cecilia declared her absolute disapprobation of any step being taken to dissolve the marriage. She insisted in the most delicate and pressing terms, on a sister's right to share her fortune with Wallenstein, and she transmitted to him a deed of gift of a large sum which the Earl had in the funds. She also insisted upon his drawing on her every half year to the amount of half her rental.

But the proud spirit of Wallenstein spurned at obligation from a woman who had given such evident proofs of aversion to him. The deed of gift was returned to Cecilia, with a few lines, informing her that Wallenstein had quitted Germany.

and that, as it was his fixed resolution not to accept of any pecuniary favour from her, he must decline all farther intercourse with her ladyship, and Lord George; he softened this refusal, however, by wording it in the politest terms; and he concluded, by expressing his wishes for her health and happiness.

Both Lord George and Cecilia were hurt at the proud perseverance of Wallenstein, but they ceased by degrees to concern themselves about him. The Earl had now been some months dead, and the time approached in which our lovely young heiress was to be presented at court, and to mix, for the first time, with that world, from which the singular disposition of her father had hitherto completely excluded her; as Lady Westbrook was a widow, and without children, Lord George thought it would be a very desirable thing for his niece, if she could be prevailed upon to reside with her, and Cecilia herself was extremely desirous of it. The gravity of Lady Westbrook, and her extreme aversion to every thing that bordered

upon the romantic, had, during the early years of Cecilia rather intimidated her; but the kind sympathy with which her ladyship had soothed her affliction for the death of her father, and the almost maternal solicitude which she seemed to feel for her ever since, had completely gained the warm and affectionate heart of Cecilia, who looked up to her both with respect and affection.

Fond as Lady Westbrook was of Cecilia, she hesitated about residing constantly with her. Her ladyship's experience and knowledge of the world, convinced her that it was too probable a lovely young female like Cecilia, who was restricted from the enjoyment of connubial happiness, would, as she advanced in life, be too apt to seek in dissipation a substitute for domestic felicity. Yet, on the other hand, she thought that Cecilia's disposition, naturally sweet and ingenuous, would render it an easy matter for an experienced friend to guide her through the rocks and shoals of fashionable life, with tolerable safety. At least, thought she, if Cecilia

should be drawn into the magic circle of dissipation, her stay in it will scarcely be lasting. Her errors must be those of the head merely, since never was a more innocent or susceptible heart.

In consequence of these reflections, she acceded to the wishes of the Countess, and Lord George. And as soon as our heroine's mourning for her father had expired, Lady Westbrook presented her at court.

The court of Britain has been long and justly famed for the beauty of its ladies, but never did a brighter *belle* adorn the royal circle. Her majesty, always remarkable for the gracious affability with which she deigned to notice and re-assure the youthful and timid part of those ladies who enjoyed the honour of being presented to her, smiled with peculiar graciousness on the lovely representative of the ancient and noble house of Delmain. If the Countess felt for a few moments awed by the presence of royalty, that awe was soon dispersed by a glow of loyal delight, which suffused her cheek with the

richest crimson, as she respectfully raised her eyes, and found those of the queen fixed upon her with an expression of pleasure and admiration.

The beautiful heiress soon became literally the rage; but equally to the credit of her head and her heart, she remained unspoiled by the facinations of flattery, which met her at every step. True, she was woman enough to feel pleased at the admiration which she excited, but she had also discernment and humility enough to think that the heiress had some share in the compliments paid to the beauty. She remained as unaffected as before she became a toast and a wit; nor did she, because she knew that all modes of dress must become her, indulge in a practice too common among those *élégantes* who lead the fashions, of inventing dresses which are calculated to disfigure half of their acquaintance.

Pleased as Lady Westbrook was with the amiable conduct of her young charge, there was one circumstance which rendered her uneasy. Cecilia tasted of pleasure

with moderation; but no part either of her time or thoughts was devoted to serious subjects. She had never in fact been impressed with any just idea of her duties; naturally benevolent and humane, it cost her no effort to lavish money on the relief of distress, but she never thought either of searching out real objects of commiseration, or of examining the claims of such as did apply to her. She had been accustomed to perform exteriorly the duties of religion, but her thoughts had never been turned to its intrinsic value, as a guide and compaſhion through life, and the more Lady Westbrook saw of her disposition, the more she trembled for her future peace.

Luckily, however, for the Countess, among the groupe of adorers who followed her footsteps, there was not one likely to put her heart in danger. It is true some were handsome, some amiable, some had wit, others grace and elegance; but although Cecilia had a hundred times declared to Lady Westbrook that she totally abjured romance, it is certain that

the image which she had drawn, in her mind's eye, of a husband, such as she could have loved, was strongly tinctured with it; and as she certainly did not see in the circle which surrounded her, any one who resembled this *rara avis* of her imagination, the ties which bound her to Wallenstein were seldom thought of.

As, however, her marriage was not even suspected, the possession of her hand was universally coveted. Lord Leadmode, whose taste in female charms, was as undisputed as his skill in horseflesh, protested that she was the finest going thing he had seen for years; that she had a devilish deal of blood about her, and unquestionably the finest head and neck in England for a curricle. He even hinted, that although marriage was in general the cursedest bore in nature, yet he actually was half tempted to leap the frightful precipice with her. His lordship in fact was more than half tempted, for he actually made proposals, which were of course rejected; but as Cecilia kept the matter secret, his lordship did not blazon it, and

grateful for her silence he continued to praise her as highly as ever; always taking care to lament at the same time though, that it was truly unfortunate for him that he could not conquer his confounded aversion to a ring, and a parson.

The world was puzzled to account for Cecilia's rejection of many unexceptionable proposals; for although her engagement to Wallenstein was generally known, their marriage was wholly unsuspected; and his abrupt departure from England occasioned a general belief that it was broken off. The situation of his niece was in every way a matter of uneasiness to Lord George. He had secretly made the most diligent enquiries respecting Wallenstein, but he found it impossible to obtain any trace of him, and he feared that no possibility would ever arise of either dissolving, or closely cementing the union of this ill-matched pair.

CHAPTER XXIII.

NEARLY seven years had elapsed from the period in which our heroine became a bride, and the world began to set her down as a determined votary of celibacy. She had almost completed her twenty-third year; her person was even more beautiful than it had promised in the dawn of youth to become, and her commerce with the world had banished, in a great degree, her romantic ideas, without injuring the natural benevolence of her heart.

She was still surrounded by admirers, but as yet she was free from any actual prepossession. Yet she could not reflect without bitterness on the fate to which her youth had been condemned; for she was obliged to own that friendship only could not fill the vacuum in her breast. The fate of Wallenstein still remained a

mystery; but both the countess and Lord George concurred in thinking that he was living, as they concluded that he would have taken measures to have them apprized of his demise, if such an event had taken place.

Shortly before Cecilia appeared in the *beau monde*, Melburne had been obliged to quit England abruptly. The dismissal of Miss Sprotzler had completely frustrated his plans of getting Cecilia into his power, and to alleviate his chagrin he plunged into a vice, which he had till then avoided, this was gaming; an unfortunate run of luck, would, if he had paid the sum which he lost, have stripped him of his whole property. Almost maddened at his ill success, he abruptly charged his antagonist with foul play. This charge, which was in reality false, the other resented in such a manner that a challenge ensued, in which Melburne mortally wounded his antagonist; and fearing to abide the event of a trial, he hastily fled to the continent.

The unfortunate man, whose life was

thus sacrificed to false honour, had a brother extremely attached to him, and he vowed to pursue his murderer with ceaseless vengeance. Melburne contrived to disguise himself, and to evade the search which D'Arcy, so he was named, made for him, on the continent. To do Melburne justice, he did not act in this manner from cowardice; he would not have dreaded a rencontre with D'Arcy, for he knew that he was infinitely his superior in skill, either as a swordsman or a marksman, but he felt some compunction for the death of Edward D'Arcy, and he dreaded lest that of his brother should swell his catalogue of crimes. He could avoid it only, however, by continuing in exile, and he believed that he was destined to finish his days in a foreign country. But in the beginning of the seventh year of his absence from England, the death of D'Arcy enabled him to visit London once more.

He was doubly rejoiced at an opportunity of doing so, because he had learned that Cecilia was still single, and that she

seemed determined against marriage. Melburne's vanity led him to ascribe her celibacy to a remaining predilection for himself; and he had little doubt if he was once to renew his addresses, of thawing the icy heart of the beautiful heiress.

Fraught with hope and expectation, he arrived in London, and he lost no time in penning an artful epistle to the countess, which had she really retained any spark of affection for him, was well calculated to revive it. He touched as lightly as he could on the subject of his absence from England, taking care to ascribe the unfortunate event which had occasioned it, to the despair he felt at her absolute rejection of him. He painted in the liveliest colours all that he had suffered from the thought that her marriage with another would place an eternal barrier between them: and he concluded with a *modest* hope that his inviolable passion, a passion, which he had cherished at the expense of his peace, almost of his reason, would at last be rewarded.

Blushes of shame and indignation suffused the cheek of Cecilia, on being thus reminded of an epoch in her life, which she always wished buried in oblivion. Lady Westbrook, who was present when she received the letter, observed her disturbance; and the countess, who had long before revealed to her the snare which the art of Melburne and Miss Sprotzler had nearly drawn her into, presented it to her to read.

" I wish, with all my heart," said her ladyship, " that this man had remained abroad, he seems as artful as he is wicked."

" I believe it," replied Cecilia; " but thank Heaven, I can have nothing to fear from him. I think the most effectual way to silence his presumptuous hopes for ever, will be to return his letter in a blank cover."

Lady Westbrook objected to this step, because there were many allusions in the letter to the terms which the Countess and Melburne had formerly been upon; and it was at last settled that Lady West-

brook should reply to it, and give him, in the name of Cecilia, a positive refusal.

The rage of Melburne on receiving it exceeded all bounds. He execrated poor Cecilia in the bitterest terms, and bound himself by a volley of oaths to revenge the affront she had offered to him, before many months should elapse.

Versed as he was, however, in all the mysteries of intrigue, he found that to get her into his power during her stay in town would be impossible; and he was obliged to defer his projected revenge till she quitted London for Belleville Lodge, where she generally spent two or three months every year.

Even when she was there, his project would be likely to be difficult of execution, because, though she still retained her fondness for walking, she was seldom unaccompanied. However an opportunity might arise, and Melburne was resolved to seize the first which should present itself.

Melburne soon found that Cecilia was in the habit of rambling every morning

before breakfast, and often alone; but in these rambles she never went out of her own grounds, and to seize her person by force in them, was utterly impracticable.

He had taken the precaution to make his valet, who was entirely unknown to the family at the lodge, hire a cottage in the neighbourhood as if for himself. Here Melburne remained in disguise, and trusted to the vigilance of his valet, who had been his associate in many acts of villainy, to observe the motions of Cecilia.

Nearly three weeks had elapsed, and their project seemed little likely to be accomplished, when chance threw a very able auxiliary in their way. Drummond, the valet of Melburne, was one day strolling round Belleville Lodge, when he recognized, in the tattered garb of a mendicant, who seemed reduced to the most deplorable state of poverty, a girl, whom he had formerly known as a servant. He would have avoided her, but finding that she knew him, he gave her a trifle, and questioned her as to the cause of her

wretched appearance. She accounted for it by a tale, which Drummond had penetration enough to see was evidently forged; but while she was relating it, his mind, ever active in schemes of villainy, was employed in devising a plan to get the Countess into his master's power through the means of this girl. He therefore affected great compassion for her distress, and appointing her to meet him the next day, returned home to unfold to Melburne the scheme which he had planned.

This was in fact to draw Cecilia out of her grounds, through the means of this woman, whose name was Mary Dawson. Melburne was elated at a scheme which appeared so practicable, and he promised to reward both Mary and him handsomely, if it could be brought about.

The next day Mary received from Dawson money to purchase habiliments less wretched and disgusting, and proper instructions for the part she was to act. He took care also to procure a chaise and horses, which were to be in readiness at a

short distance from the lodge on the following morning.

The following morning, however, it rained, a circumstance that threw Melburne into a fit of ill-humour, which he vented upon his confederate in villainy, [redacted]. This man, who was bound by interest alone to Melburne, was naturally insolent, and his replies provoked his master so much, that a grand quarrel ensued, which had nearly rendered the whole scheme abortive.

Melburne recollected himself in time to conclude the dispute amicably. He flung his purse to Dawson, declaring in a half angry, half jesting tone, that he had a great mind to break his head for his impertinence in presuming to talk to him, when he had such reason to be out of humour. [redacted] pocketed the purse, observing at the same time, with great *sang froid,* that to be sure it was cursed provoking, all things considered, but they must hope to be more lucky the next morning. Melburne's pride was not a

little stung at the fellow's saucy famili-arity, but he gulped down the angry exclamation, which was just rising to his tongue's end, secretly resolving, however, to take ample revenge when once Cecilia was securely his own.

CHAPTER, XXIV.

The next day he rose with the dawn, and he beheld with exultation the approach of a lovely, cheerful morning, which he hoped Cecilia would be tempted to enjoy without doors. He repaired with Dawson to the scene [illegible] acti[illegible] long before the appointed time, and they dispatched Mary to watch for the appearance of the Countess.

For a long time, however, she waited in vain. At last one of the domestics appeared and unlocked the gate, and soon afterwards, to Mary's great satisfaction, he went into another part of the grounds.

In some time after the man was out of sight, Cecilia approached, and Mary, who had her cue, waited till she came quite near, and then, in a voice apparently almost inarticulate with terror, exclaimed, "Oh,

my God, what shall I do? he is surely dying!"

"Who is dying, my good woman?" cried the unsuspicious Cecilia.

"My child, my little boy, he has fainted in the road a few steps from hence. Oh do! for God's sake, madam, give me a smelling bottle or something to recover him."

"I will go with you myself," cried Cecilia, whose heart was penetrated by the evident appearance of distress, which Mary, who was an excellent actress, assumed to a miracle.

"Heaven bless you, madam!" cried she, fervently. "We shall be at the spot in a moment;" and followed by Cecilia, she darted on with the rapidity of lightning towards the spot where the chaise stood waiting.

In her benevolent haste to be of service, Cecilia thought not of the distance which Mary led her; and spent with running, she was nearly breathless when Mary stopped, and at the same moment two

men masked rushed from the chaise, and catching her in their arms forcibly seated her in it. At this instant the noise of an approaching vehicle was heard, the chaise drove off at full speed, and one of the ruffians clapping a handkerchief to Cecilia's mouth, muttered a threat of instant death if she presumed to cry out.

His threat was powerless. Cecilia had sufficient presence of mind to exert her whole strength in an endeavour to escape from his grasp, and she did contrive to extricate herself for one moment, in which she uttered a loud and piercing shriek.

"Damnation!" muttered the ruffian, who now with savage violence crammed the handkerchief into her mouth so forcibly, that she was in danger of being suffocated.

The other ruffian meanwhile had pulled the mask from his face, and vociferated to the postillion to drive faster, when an exclamation of "stop this instant! if you dare proceed you are a dead man," was heard, and a stranger, of a noble appearance,

leaped from the other chaise, which was now close to them, and presented himself at the window of the one in which Cecilia was a prisoner.

Just as he began to speak, the ruffian who held Cecilia loosed his grasp for a moment, and drawing a pistol from his bosom presented it at the stranger's head; but it missed fire, luckily for the stranger, whose life must otherwise, from the sure aim which the villain had taken, have fallen a sacrifice to his humanity.

"Cowardly scoundrel!" cried the other, bursting open the chaise door: and grappling with the intended assassin, "you shall pay dear for your treachery." The stranger's servant and the driver of his chaise now joined him. Drummond, who remained wholly inactive, tried to escape, but was secured by them; while the stranger, dragging Melburne with Herculean grasp from the chaise, threw him after a violent shake upon the ground.

Poor Cecilia had fainted when she saw the pistol levelled at the head of her de-

liverer; but what was her shame and mortification when, on opening her eyes, she heard the voice of Melburne, execrating her as the most false and perfidious of beings, and swearing that he would yet be revenged.

He was speedily bound, and placed by the stranger's orders in the chaise which he had just quitted to be conveyed to the nearest magistrate. This step, which Cecilia knew not how to oppose, overwhelmed her with terror. She already saw herself held up to public scorn by the injurious representations which he would make of the affair; and oppressed even to agony by the violence of her emotions, she would probably have fainted a second time, had she not found relief in a sudden burst of tears.

The stranger appeared shocked and amazed at the distress of Cecilia, who ashamed at giving vent to emotion which might so easily be misunderstood, endeavoured to compose herself. It suddenly occurred to her that by candidly confes-

sing the whole affair to Lord George, some means might be taken to prevent a public exposure, and she begged that the stranger would accompany her to Belleville Lodge, and see that Melburne was safely conducted thither.

He immediately acquiesced, and a few minutes brought them to the house, from which the Countess had not yet been missed. Lord George was not yet risen, and Cecilia was surprised at the stranger's requesting a few minutes private conversation with him, before he should be informed of the business of the morning.

Lord George readily acceded to this request, but their interview appeared very long to Cecilia. Melburne, who now began to get a little cool, racked his brains in vain to devise some feasible excuse for the step which he had taken. He had still Cecilia's letters, but they were not written in terms to prove any thing in his favour; and her decided refusal of his hand, given through Lady Westbrook, left him without the possibility of pleading that he had recently received any encou-

ragement from her. Under all circumstances, therefore, he had but one hope of escaping the punishment which he so justly deserved, and that was the dread he thought Cecilia would entertain of the colouring he might give to the affair.

CHAPTER XXV.

CECILIA had sent a message to her uncle, requesting to see him before he spoke to Melburne. She was not surprised at finding him agitated, but there was something in his manner which she could not understand.

"Well, my dear niece," cried he, embracing her with great fervour, "this has been a most fortunate circumstance.— Your rescue I mean. The Colonel is a noble fellow, he has proved himself worthy of ——. But, pshaw! I forget that you don't know I am talking of your deliverer, a Colonel in the Prussian service, rose solely by his own merit. Oh! if that infernal villain's murderous aim had taken effect, what misery.

"But, my dear Cecilia, this business has made a fool of me, and that is the truth of it. Come, sit down, and tell me what was the

reason you did not let your deliverer carry this rascal to a magistrate at once.

With cheeks crimsoned with the consciousness of an error, which she had long since repented of, Cecilia ingenuously avowed to Lord George her early entanglement with Melburne. His vexation was evident, but in compassion to the visible agitation of the Countess, he refrained from expressing it.

" Compose yourself, my child," said he, " I conceive what your feelings are, and I shall endeavour to settle this affair, so as to spare you all farther cause of regret. I will see the fellow in private, and make him such an offer as he must be a fool to refuse."

" But, my dear uncle, you have still another favour to confer upon me. My deliverer heard the cruel aspersions of Melburne; and what must he think of me?"

" Then you wish me to justify you in his eyes?"

" Certainly, my dear uncle," replied the blushing Cecilia.

"Well, my child," cried he, "it shall be done. Heaven be praised for this happy day!" And as he again fervently embraced Cecilia, she perceived that his eyes were filled with tears. "And now," cried he, "that I am a little composed, let me inform you, that your deliverer, Colonel Gortz, is related to an old and valued friend of mine. Business having obliged him to visit England, he resolved to see me before his departure, and he was upon his road to our house, when Providence sent him to your rescue."

Lord George then quitted the room, leaving Cecilia surprised at an agitation which his general calmness of manner rendered the more remarkable.

Tenderness for his niece's feelings prompted Lord George to offer Melburne his choice of being immediately proceeded against for his base attempt on the Countess's person, or of directly returning to the continent for one year. He chose the latter, as his lordship had expected. In fact, he was equally surprised and delighted at getting off so easily.

Cecilia prepared herself to meet the Colonel with real trepidation. She had commissioned her uncle to press him to make Belleville Lodge his residence during the remainder of her stay in the country. She hesitated at first about giving the invitation; but Lord George observed, that the company of Lady Westbrook, and his own presence would be sufficient to guard her reputation, even if she had not invited some friends to join her in the course of a few days.

The adventure of the morning furnished her with a plausible excuse to avoid seeing the Colonel till dinner was announced; and she then paid her compliments to him in a hesitating and confused tone. The respectful manner in which the Colonel replied, however, soon reassured her, and she tried to rally her spirits, and enter into conversation.

The Countess had never seen her uncle to such advantage; he drew the Colonel into a conversation on the manners of the continent, which soon became lively and interesting. The striking and spirited ob-

servations of the Colonel, the pleasant way in which he described and commented upon the difference between foreign and English manners, made the time pass so rapidly, that it was late before the party thought of separating; and when Cecilia and Lady Westbrook met the next morning, they agreed that they had spent a most delightful evening.

"Although I never can have seen the Colonel before," said Cecilia, "I know not how it is, but the tones of his voice seemed at first quite familiar to me; and certainly his features resemble those of some one I have been acquainted with, though I cannot call to mind who it is."

"His voice is uncommonly harmonious," replied Lady Westbrook, "but that terrible lisp of his spoils him for an orator."

As she spoke the Colonel appeared, and Cecilia, who had now conquered the embarrassment with which his presence had at first inspired her, received his compliments with ease and cheerfulness.

In a few days the friends whom the Countess expected from London arrived. They were Sir Richard and Lady Owen, Miss Owen their daughter, and a pretty coquettish girl of the name of Nesbit, niece to Lady Owen. The baronet and his lady were a worthy and amiable couple, whom the Countess had long known: but of Miss Owen, who was just come out, as it is called, she knew very little, and of Miss Nesbit nothing; and she soon found, that but for the Colonel, they would have been a very *heavy* addition to her circle.

Miss Owen was a pretty automaton, whose languid affectation tired every one around her. Satisfied that she must be a personage of the greatest importance to others, she never scrupled to tease the good-nature or good-humour of those around her to comply with her whims, which were sometimes extravagant and ridiculous enough. But though she never minded what compliances she exacted from others, no one could be less disposed than she was to make the smallest sacrifice to the

comfort or convenience of her friends. She was in reality, so exceedingly selfish, that she would not put herself, what she called out of the way, for any being on earth. Naturally indolent to excess, one passion only could stimulate her to exertion, and that one was the love of admiration.

Miss Nesbit was a complete contrast to her cousin in every thing but vanity, and of that she had nearly an equal share: it was, however, far less offensive than that of Miss Owen, though equally obvious. The one expected to inspire admiration without making the smallest effort, the other threw her pretty figure into every attitude which she could think of, racked the invention of her *marchande de modes*, for new and becoming dresses, and chattered away with a volubility which she mistook for wit. When she had literally fatigued herself, she was well satisfied if she succeeded in obtaining, as a recompence, the transient admiration of some fashionable butterfly, who laughed perhaps the

next moment at the pains which she had taken to obtain it.

Each of these young ladies regarded the Colonel as their destined prize, and each in her way, laid seige to his heart; but, alas! the Colonel was blind, insensible and blind. Miss Owen was at first astonished, and then indignant at his stupidity; in vain did she indicate a wish that he should read to her some pathetic novel, or some melting poem; in vain hint a desire to enjoy the lovely moonlight nights in the open air. The Colonel had the hardihood to rally her on her literary taste, to criticise her favourite works, and what was worst of all, to prove, by dint of plain reasoning, that such works were fit only to enervate the mind. And he had the bad taste to prefer social conversation in the drawing room, to the pleasure of contemplating the starry Heavens, with her for his companion.

Her cousin's failure of success was a real triumph to Miss Nesbit; but she soon found that her lively graces were not more

successful in attaching the insensible Colonel, than Miss Owen's languishing ones. "I am really provoked," said she one day to Cecilia, "with this strange being's *outre* notions; would you believe that he has actually been reading me a lecture." "Indeed," cried the Countess; "and pray on what subject?"

"Why I am almost ashamed to tell you, but you are a good creature, and will not set me down for a monster of inhumanity, because I chanced to give way to an emotion of anger. You know that my maid is a French woman, who cannot speak a word of English. I had her because I had been told that French women make the best *femmes-de-chambre* in the world; and to do the girl justice, she dresses me very well, and is an excellent needlewoman. She began some time ago a beautiful trimming for me, which I was very anxious to have finished; it was a rich embroidery in coloured silks. There was a good deal of it done; but would you believe, that the other day, she was so un-

pardonably aukward, as to spill the whole contents of an ink-stand over my trimming, which of course she totally spoiled?"

"Poor girl!" said Cecilia.

"Poor girl, indeed! My dear Countess, you should reserve your pity for me, I assure you I merit it more than Justine; for you must know that I was absolutely ruined last winter, and having neither money nor credit, I must endeavour to get through the next, by following the example of my friend Miss Makeshift."

"The name is new to me," cried Cecilia.

"Oh, I dare say it is, for it is only a nick-name which we gave to Miss ———, who absolutely contrives to make one dress answer half a dozen purposes."

Cecilia had observed that Miss Nesbit was extravagant in her dress, and she said, with a half smile: "I should hardly suspect you of practising such economy."

"Thank you, my dear Countess; I see by that saucy smile of yours, that you do not give me credit for much prudence."

"Say rather I do not give you credit for meanness, for your friend's economy is nothing else."

"Oh, I assure you it is commonly practised, only to be sure few people carry it so far as Miss———. How can it be otherwise, my dear Countess, when there are so many expenses now-a-days which formerly people never thought of? One can't look mean you know in some things; and what with public subscriptions, where you are obliged to put your name down for a handsome sum, in order to appear like other people, and lectures on mineralogy, chemistry, conchology, and half a thousand other things, which you must attend if you would appear fashionable; you ought to be as rich as Crœsus if you would do things with any eclat at all.

"But I am running away from my story. Being in short on the verge of bankruptcy, and finding Justine very ingenious, I thought I would begin to dress *à-la-make-shift*, and I intended to have some trimmings, and worked bodies, which would

serve to vary the same gown; this was the first of them, and I leave you to judge how mortified I must have been to see it spoiled. In my passion I rated Justine most severely, and the girl has been such a fool as to fret about it ever since. Well, I chanced to tell Miss Owen (who asked me some question about the trimming) the whole affair before this cynic of a Colonel, who contrived, with apparent good humour and even politeness, to tell me some of the bitterest truths imaginable."

"Indeed!" said Cecilia.

"Yes, really, although I cannot help thinking too that he greatly exaggerated my fault; but the anger I was beginning to feel against him vanished, when dropping the serious tone in which he had spoken of the cruelty of lightly wounding the feelings of our fellow creatures, he proceeded to charge me gaily with a sin against myself. He vowed that nothing injured a fine face so much as the giving way to bursts of anger; and he drew such a picture of the difference which passion

makes in the countenance, that I believe I never will suffer myself to be transported with rage again."

"Then, after all," said Cecilia, "you are obliged to him for good advice given, as you yourself acknowledge with politeness, and I really do not see any thing provoking in that."

"What, is it not provoking to be told of one's faults by a male creature; especially one of his age, who ought not to think that it was possible for one to have any faults? I wish, with all my heart, I could see him deeply in love, but I suppose he is too rational ever to become a sighing swain."

CHAPTER XXVI.

THESE words threw Cecilia into a train of reflections which startled her. She had now passed some weeks in the society of the Colonel, and every day tended to increase her esteem for him. But was it really esteem? Did no sentiment more tender lurk beneath admiration of his virtues, and gratitude for the service he had rendered her? Cecilia's heart fluttered with a new and strange sensation, as she asked herself this question; but a few minutes reflection reassured her, and she repeated to herself again and again that her heart was in no danger. How, indeed, said she to herself could it be in danger from a man who seems so indifferent to me?

Notwithstanding this, however, her engagement to Wallenstein, appeared to her in a more galling light than it had

ever done before. A considerable time had elapsed since his name had been mentioned between her and her uncle, and she now thought of questioning Lord George respecting him. Yet this wish was checked by her feeling, for the first time, an inconceivable reluctance to begin the subject. She continued to muse on her untoward fate, till finding her spirits every moment more oppressed, she walked into the grounds to endeavour to dissipate her sadness by a ramble.

She had not walked long when she perceived the Colonel and Justine engaged in earnest conversation. Cecilia was superior to meanness of any kind; but from an impulse for which she could not account, instead of walking on and meeting them, she stepped behind a clump of trees which concealed her from their view, at the same time that she saw them plainly. The Colonel was speaking with, as Cecilia fancied, a most tender air to Justine, who was in tears; she suddenly snatched his hand, which she pressed in seeming rapture to her lips, and the Colonel, could

Cecilia believe her senses! the Colonel actually embraced her; they then turned, still walking together towards the house, and the Countess remained for some time in the same spot to which she seemed fixed by astonishment.

"Good Heaven!" said she at length to herself, "can it be possible, that this is the man to whom I looked up as a superior being? base, detestable hypocrite! how much more odious art thou than the avowedly depraved! So then his tenderness for the feelings of an inferior and a stranger, is only a blind to cover his guilty passion." But how do I know," continued she, in a doubting tone, "that it is a guilty passion, may he not be honourably attached to her?".

This idea exculpated the colonel, but it did not tend to restore the Countess' good-humour. Philips found it impossible to dress her to her satisfaction, and this was the more galling to the poor woman, because Cecilia, who was uncommonly easy to please, scarcely ever found fault with her.

When she entered the dining-room, the Colonel advanced to meet her, but he drew back with a mortified and disturbed air at the slight and haughty reply which she made to his civilities. She blushed with the consciousness of her own rudeness, and Lady Westbrook, making at the moment an *à-propos* enquiry whether she was well, complained of a violent head ache.

This was in fact true. She had a severe pain in her head, but perhaps the one in her heart was just then more troublesome. She found it impossible to forget the scene of the morning, and she began to fear from the effect which it produced upon her, that the Colonel was dearer to her than she had imagined.

She said to herself that the discovery was a fortunate one, since his unworthiness would soon conquer her partiality, and in a short time she should cease to think of him; but somehow or other it happened, that during three succeeding days, in which she repeated this to her-

self incessantly, she thought of nothing else.

On the fourth morning, Philips in dressing her, made one or two blunders which Cecilia did not reprove; but Philips said, " I beg your ladyship's pardon for being so stupid this morning, but my head is so full of something which I have just heard, that I quite forget what I am about."

" And pray," cried Cecilia good-humouredly, " what is this wonderful thing which has so deranged your ideas?"

" Nay, my lady, it is not a wonderful thing; but to be sure as gentlemen are now-a-days, one may well think it rather surprising, that a fine young man, like the Colonel, should take such an interest for a person like Justine."

" An interest!" repeated Cecilia faintly.

" Oh, yes, my lady, if you will only have patience to hear all."

The Countess absolutely gasped for breath. Her last conjecture was then a

just one; the Colonel felt an honourable passion for Justine, and was about to marry her. Cecilia would have given the world had she been able to ask the question, but her tongue seemed actually spell-bound; and she listened in breathless agitation to Philips, who, delighted with what she had to relate, was in no hurry to come to the conclusion of her tale.

"You must know, my lady, that Justine was not born to the situation she is at present placed in; her parents are respectable by birth, and were formerly opulent; but her mother has been many years dead, and circumstances occurred, which have, by degrees, reduced her father to penury. Justine, who, I am certain, is an excellent daughter, being desirous of assisting her father, whose name is Hebert, proposed to go into the service of a lady as *femme-de-chambre;* but her father, who has a great deal of pride, resolutely resisted her taking this step, and protested that he would rather starve than suffer his daughter to humble herself in such a manner in her own country.

"Poor Justine did not dare to oppose him, but she thought there was a probability of his being reconciled to her entering into the service of a stranger, and she got some friends to enquire after a situation for her in London. However, it was not a very easy matter for her to obtain one, because she insisted upon having a sum of money in advance, in order that she might leave her father a supply. At last she obtained a situation with Miss Nesbit, and she came to London with that young lady, whom she shortly afterwards accompanied here."

"Monsieur Hebert reproached himself bitterly for suffering his daughter to leave him; and you, my lady, who are yourself so kind and good to every body, cannot form an idea how much the poor girl suffered in quitting the roof of her parent, humble as it was, for that of a mistress. However, she might have borne her own situation, had not she found that her father pined so much after her, that she feared his health would fall a sacrifice to his feelings."

"And why," said Cecilia, "did she not return?"

"Because, my lady, Miss Nesbit had advanced her money, and she had no means of paying it. So the poor girl, who is naturally of a very independent spirit, strove to console herself with the hope, that her father would conquer his regrets for her absence, and that she should, in a little time, be more reconciled to her situation, and able besides to send him a farther supply of cash.

"An accident happened, however, which drew upon her her mistress' anger, and it was on this occasion that she, for the first time, communicated in part her troubles to me. I was partial to her from my first seeing her, and she liked me, because I could speak to her in her native tongue, and I never laughed at her when she attempted to speak English."

"Just then she received a letter from her father, written in such low and desponding terms, that she greatly feared he would sink under her absence. This letter considerably aggravated her unhappiness, and

for some days she wept almost incessantly.

"One morning she went into the garden, before her lady was up, taking with her her father's letter. She seated herself in an alcove, and began reading it. When she came to a passage in which the old man said, he was certain that his death was near, and all he begged of Heaven, was that she might be with him when it took place, she burst into tears, and said aloud in French: "would to God, my father, that I could share with thee the quiet asylum of the tomb!"

"For shame!" said a voice in French, which sounded close to her," would you wish to desert the post in which God has placed you, before his fiat calls you?" She raised her eyes in great confusion, and beheld the Colonel standing close to the alcove.

"Poor Justine, who was ready to sink, would have escaped, but the Colonel laid hold of her arm, and pressed so earnestly to know the cause of her affliction, that she at last revealed it. He told her to cheer

her spirits, for he would arrange matters so, that she should return to her father, and so he has, my lady. He wrote, it seems, to a friend of his to make enquiries respecting Hebert, and finding that Justine's account was correct, and that her father was a man of good education, he has interested himself so much with a Prussian nobleman, now residing in France, that he has taken Hebert as his secretary, at a handsome salary. The news came three or four days ago, but the Colonel charged Justine not to mention a syllable of it, and gave her, at the same time, money to pay Miss Nesbit, and to pay her own expences to Paris.

"Justine kept the secret till last night, and would have kept it still, in fact, had I not by chance began speaking to her of the Colonel: she tried to turn the discourse to something else; but when she found that she could not, her heart grew so full that she could keep the secret no longer. As for me, I declare, my lady, I have never slept all night for thinking of the Colonel, and wishing———."

Philips made a full stop, and Cecilia, lost in a variety of emotions, at once pleasant and painful, remained also for a few minutes silent.

CHAPTER XXVII.

When Phillips had done dressing her, she desired her to inform Justine that she wished to speak with her, and almost immediately the young French woman made her appearance.

What a beautifier is joy, thought the Countess, as she looked at Justine, whom she formerly regarded as only pretty, but who now appeared beautiful, so much were her naturally fine features improved by the animated and happy expression of her countenance.

Cecilia indulged herself in the dangerous pleasure of hearing the whole affair again from Justine, whose naturally ardent and grateful temper, led her to dwell with enthusiasm on the praises of the Colonel, whom she declared to be an angel, if ever there was one on earth.

" If, my lady," cried she, " you had but

heard the manner in which he spoke to me; how gently, and yet how forcibly he reproved me for giving myself up to despair, you never would have forgot it? Indeed, my lady, he made me fully sensible how wrong I had been, and I trust that God will give me grace never to despair again whatever happens to me."

"He is a good man," said Cecilia, fervently; "but although I could not, perhaps, have been such a friend to you, as he has shewed himself, yet I would gladly have served you, Justine, had you revealed your situation to me. As it is, you must not refuse to accept something from me, which may be of use hereafter."

Justine drew back, and with crimsoned cheeks, declared "that thanks to *Monsieur le Colonel*, she had already more money than she knew what to do with."

Cecilia, however, would not be refused. She told Justine if she did not want it in the interim, she must reserve it for a marriage portion. Justine still refused, till she found the Countess was seriously displeased, and then she took the money, ex-

claiming, "ah, my lady, surely, if ever two people on earth resembled each other, it is you and the Colonel."

"Why do you think so, Justine?" asked Cecilia, touched and flattered in spite of herself, with what she considered the highest compliment that could be paid her.

"Because you are both so anxious to do good to others." Cecilia sighed; she felt that in this respect the Colonel had greatly the advantage of her. "With what benevolent promptness" thought she, "has he exerted himself for the relief of this poor girl. Oh! doubtless he seeks opportunities of doing good, nor sits idly waiting as I have done to be solicited, but it is not too late for me to copy his example."

A heart, naturally warm and affectionate, when it has been guilty of injustice, seeks to repair it by evincing a double portion of kindness and good will towards the injured party. Never did Cecilia feel so kindly disposed towards the Colonel; but conscious that she was actuated by more

than esteem for him, she dared not trust herself to give way to her feelings, and her manner towards him became so visibly constrained, that Lady Westbrook one day remarked it to her.

"The Colonel, my dear Cecilia," said she, "has expressed to me a fear of having offended you. I told him that I thought he must be mistaken; but really I am inclined to believe, from your manner, that he is right."

"I cannot conceive how you could entertain such an idea; so far from having offended me, he is higher in my esteem than ever, since I learned his generous conduct to Justine."

"And yet, I think, it was about that time that your behaviour changed so much towards him?"

Cecilia blushed deeply; she had never revealed, even to Lady Westbrook, the suspicions which she cherished of his attachment to Justine, and she knew not how to reply.

"I know," pursued Lady Westbrook, "that he is so hurt at the idea of incurring

your displeasure, that he means to leave us, although it had been settled at first that he was to continue your guest, during the short time that he could remain in England."

"I believe," faultered out Cecilia, "that he ought to go, I mean that I ought not to press his stay."

"Why, my dear child?" cried Lady Westbrook. "I positively do not know you to day. Surely, without pressing his stay, you should in common politeness treat him in the easy friendly manner which you did at first. If he was a different sort of man, it might be prudent to be more on the reserve; but though he certainly is a worthy, pleasant creature, yet he is not the sort of man to put your heart in any danger."

Good Heavens! thought Cecilia, what blindness! "I hope," said she seriously, "that I shall guard my heart as I ought to do; but I see no reason why the Colonel should be so little likely to make an impression on it."

"Why, my dear, he is plain, not to say downright ugly."

"Nay, now," cried Cecilia, warmly, "you wrong your own judgment. How can a man with such fine teeth and eyes, and such an animated and expressive countenance, be plain?"

"I do not know how it can be, but it is generally allowed that it is the case," replied Lady Westbrook. "The small pox has made terrible ravages in the poor Colonel's face; but putting person out of the question, he does not appear to me to possess those qualities which would turn the head of a beautiful young woman, adulated as you have been. He acts wholly from principle; and I believe has such old fashioned notions of honour, that he would not allow himself to feel, even a momentary partiality, for the loveliest woman on earth, so greatly superior to him in rank and fortune, as you are."

The last words roused all the pride of Cecilia. "Recollect, Lady Westbrook," cried she, "that I am not accusing Colonel

Gortz of a partiality for me. I am sensible that I owe much to his courage and humanity; and I will certainly, if he talks of going, request that he will not deprive us of his company till he is obliged to do so."

Lady Westbrook made no reply, but Cecilia observed a sort of suppressed smile which piqued her, and which she could not account for.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE following day, to the Countess's surprise, Lady Westbrook entered her dressing room, followed by the Colonel. "My dear Countess," cried she, "Lord George and I have tried our powers of persuasion on this impenetrable being in vain. He declares that he must leave us; but as I conceive that he will be too gallant to use the imperative mood in talking to you upon the subject, I will leave you to avenge the affront offered to Lord George and myself, by obliging him to give up his resolution."

As Lady Westbrook ceased speaking, she walked out of the room, leaving Cecilia so confused and agitated, that she had scarcely power to request the Colonel would be seated. Some minutes elapsed before she could summon resolution to speak to him about his departure.

" Lady Westbrook informed me, Colonel," said she, " that some inadvertence or other of mine, has occasioned a resolution so unpleasant to us all. If I have offended, it was unintentionally believe me; and I hope I have not sinned beyond forgiveness."

" Dear Lady Delmain, do not talk of forgiveness, I have nothing to complain of."

" Then you will remain with us?"

" Pardon me, I must go."

" Nay, now," cried Cecilia, affecting a gaiety she was far from feeling, " you disprove Lady Westbrook's good opinion of your gallantry."

The Colonel fixed his eyes upon her as if he would have read her heart; and seizing her hand, he said in a voice of great agitation, " Lady Delmain this moment must decide my fate. I have cherished, in spite of reason, a passion, which I fear you never can return. Oh! how anxiously, but always vainly, have I watched to try if I could trace in your eye, in your voice, any symptom of tenderness for an unfor-

tunate, whose whole soul is devoted to you. You answer me not ; you are still cold and obdurate ! Farewell then, Cecilia, farewell for ever !"

It would be impossible to paint the opposite emotions which agitated, at this moment, the bosom of Cecilia. The surprise, and even anger which she felt at this abrupt declaration of his passion, were swallowed up in the tenderest pity for the excessive anguish visible in his countenance. The thought that he was quitting her for ever, and in anger, wrung her heart ; and as he turned to leave the room, she burst into tears.

" You weep, Cecilia," cried he, in a softened accent. " Oh ! dare I hope that those tears fall for me : that if I cannot inspire love, at least you take an interest in my fate."

" I do indeed," cried she fervently, " a deeper interest, than situated as I am, I ought to take. A cruel but involuntary entanglement binds me to a life of celibacy ; had it been otherwise, had I been free—," she stopped suddenly, affrighted

at the confession which she was about to make; but she had said enough; the Colonel was upon his knees, he had seized her hands, which he passionately grasped between his own, and covered with kisses. "Go, Colonel, go" cried Cecilia, alarmed at his vehemence, "for Heaven's sake leave me!"

"Never, never, but with life! my own, my adored Cecilia! Look up, my love, and confirm the happiness of your Wallenstein! your husband!"

Scarcely could Cecilia believe the evidence of her senses. "Wallenstein!" said she faintly, "impossible! it cannot be!"

"I swear to you 'tis truth! but calm yourself, my beloved, let me support you to the window, and I will soon explain this seeming impossibility."

Reader, have you ever been in love? seriously, soberly in love? If you have, perhaps you can explain how it happened; that although an hour had elapsed before Lord George and Lady Westbrook joined our reunited pair; and although Wallenstein had began his promised explanation several times, it was yet unfinished.

"My dear niece," cried Lord George, as he folded the Countess in his arms, "this is a happy day for us all; but it is doubly so for me, for it is in a great measure my work. Would you believe that this romantic fellow had half a mind to run away after all without revealing himself. But we must punish him, my child, now that we have once more tightened his chains, must we not?"

"And pray," cried Lady Westbrook, "what share of credit do you allow me in the business? If the Colonel had not been the most incorrigibly modest man in the world, I could have convinced him that he was not *quite* such an object of terror to his beloved as he imagined. "Could I not, my dear Countess," continued she, turning archly to Cecilia, who blushing and smiling, clapped her hand on her ladyship's mouth, for she perfectly remembered the manner in which her ladyship had manœuvred to learn her real opinion of the Colonel.

"Nay," cried Lord George, "I am very willing to acknowledge that your ladyship

has exerted your talents very successfully in this business; and as a proof of the high respect which I entertain for them; I wish you would call them into action, to find some plausible way of accounting to our friends, for the ransformation of Colonel Gortz into Baron Wallenstein."

"Nothing more easy, my dear Lord George. You know that the engagement between the Countess and the Baron was talked of long ago; we have nothing, therefore to do, but to tell the truth, only it may perhaps be as well not to reveal the whole truth. Let us say that the Baron, on being rejected by your niece, when he was a youth, and she a mere girl, went abroad. Not being able to get her image out of his head, and finding himself so altered by the lapse of six years, (and the ravages of the small pox, interposed Wallenstein,) as to stand little chance of being discovered, he presented himself as a stranger to her ladyship, and having the good fortune to gain her affections in his assumed character, nothing now remains to prevent their marriage."

"Bravo!" cried Lord George. "Your ladyship has arranged the matter admirably; and the sooner we get through this explanation, and the presentation of the Baron in his new character to our friends, the better."

CHAPTER XXIX.

WHILE Lord George is making his explanations, we will present the reader with Wallenstein's narrative in his own words.

"Impressed as my father was with a belief that I should probably pass great part of my life in England, he took pains to teach me the language, and to make me acquainted with the laws and customs of the country. He endeavoured also to prepossess me in favour of the national character of the English, and he probably would have succeeded had not his efforts been counteracted by my grandmother, whose prejudices against every thing English were extravagantly high. Thus, while my father warmly praised the honour, probity, and general benevolence of the English; Madame Weimar as warmly reprobated their coldness, gloom and haughtiness. English women in particular she

described as possessing a degree of sullenness and frigidity, which repelled affection, and which rendered their marriages with men of other countries in general unhappy.

"I had naturally strong affections; and although I was too young to consider the subject of matrimony seriously, I felt the greatest repugnance to exchange my own country, and the friends who cherished me with the utmost tenderness for strangers, who probably would regard me with coldness, if not aversion; for I was aware that it was only the Earl of Delmain who was ardently desirous of the union; and that his family had merely acquiesced in his will.

"My indifferent health rendered me more attached to my grandmother, to whose incessant cares I probably owe my life, and next to my father I loved her better than any human being; but my affection and veneration for him exceeded all bounds; and I would cheerfully have laid down my life to please him. Knowing how anxious he was that I should complete my educa-

tion in England, I never expressed any repugnance to the measure, but I was secretly pleased that I was prevented, even by ill health, from quitting Germany.

"In my father's last illness he spoke to me more fully than he had ever done before on the subject of the intended union; the completion of which, he said, was a measure very near his heart. I eagerly interrupted him, with a declaration that I was ready to give him any promise he pleased, that I would hasten to England, and offer myself to the acceptance of Lady Cecilia, as soon as the Earl her father deemed it proper to conclude the marriage. My father, however, would accept only a conditional promise, but he earnestly begged of me not to suffer myself to be prejudiced against my new connexions, and above all, to preserve my heart for Lady Cecilia.

"My sorrow for the death of my father was unbounded, and it was aggravated by the thought that I should be obliged to leave Madame Weimar, whose precarious state of health rendered it most probable

that I should never see her again. This thought, while it increased my misery, nearly broke the heart of my poor grandmother. The generosity of the Earl in so readily consenting to my stay in Germany, relieved us from the terrors of parting, and as every day rendered Madame Weimar's health worse, I devoted to her the greatest part of my time, and the little which I did not pass with her, I gave up to my studies.

"My preceptor still continued with us he was a good and worthy man, but passionately attached himself to the sciences; he was delighted to see that I also was smitten with a love of learning, and he encouraged me to cherish it at the expence of my health. Thus, instead of taking exercise in the open air, and endeavouring to strengthen my constitution by early hours, and regular meals; I frequently, after passing the greatest part of the day in my grandmother's apartment, spent almost the whole of the night in study, this mode of life of course affected my health. I began to lose my appetite,

and in a little time I became the pale, sickly skeleton which I was when I arrived in England.

"Some months before the death of my grandmother, she lost a female friend, who had long lived with her. This lady's place was supplied by a distant relation, a widow with one daughter, who was left by the death of her husband in reduced circumstances. My grandmother was very desirous to have her, for she began in fact to fear that my health would be completely sacrificed, and she wished to relieve me from my constant attendance in her chamber.

"I had been so little accustomed to any society, that I heard with real uneasiness of the expected addition to our family; but the pleasing manners of Madame Hansler, and her excessive tenderness for my grandmother, soon conciliated my regard. As to her daughter Amelia, I heard that she was pretty and amiable, but she interested me so little that I hardly took notice of her.

"The arrival of Madame Hansler did not,

however, relieve me much from my attendance upon Madame Weimar, whose sufferings grew every day more acute; and as I knew that my presence soothed her, even in the midst of pain, I persisted in passing the chief part of my time with her.

"The indisposition ofMadame Hansler, made her depute Amelia to perform those little offices which she was accustomed to do in the apartments of Madame Weimar. This circumstance threw us more together, and I began to think Amelia very amiable. When I observed the gentleness with which she bore the petulance of my grandmother, the kind and watchful solicitude with which she administered to her wants, and the tender anxiety which she shewed to alleviate, if possible, her sufferings, I felt every day more charmed with her; and in short, in the course of a few weeks, I was, without knowing it, violently in love.

"Madame Hansler's returning health, released Amelia from a continued attendance upon Madame Weimar, and

then, for the first time, I began to attend to my grandmother's repeatedly expressed wishes, that I would take a little exercise. A walk always appeared delightful when Amelia was my companion; and as my looks proved that I derived benefit from exercise, Madame Weimar was importunate with me to continue it.

"These walks, however, opened my eyes to the state of my heart. Amelia and I were upon the best terms. I even began, with the presumption natural to my age, to fancy that my affection was returned; but this idea, which in other circumstances would have been so delightful, was a source of pain rather than pleasure on account of my intended marriage."

CHAPTER XXX.

"I HAD not forgotten my promise to my deceased father, that I would keep my heart disengaged, and I reproached myself severely for having broken it; but I had still a hope, which my sanguine imagination soon almost converted into certainty. This was the probability of my being disagreeable to Lady Cecilia, whose inclinations my father had solemnly commanded me to consult.

"Nevertheless, in the uncertainty in which I was, I deemed it would be dishonourable even to hint my passion to Amelia; and an event very soon occurred which made me rejoice that I had had the prudence to be silent.

"One day, when I went to seek Amelia in the garden, I perceived her seated in an alcove. I approached her unseen, she was reading a letter, and the tears were stream-

ing from her eyes. Shocked and alarmed at the sight of her evident distress, I hastily begged of her to tell me the cause.

"For some time she refused; at last, overcome by my importunities, she confessed that the letter was from a young officer whom she tenderly loved, and who was fondly attached to her, but want of fortune on both sides prevented their union.

"Amelia has told me since, that while she was speaking, I stood still and without interrupting her. As soon as she had finished, I uttered a loud cry, and darting from her with the rapidity of lightning, I was out of her sight in a moment, leaving her equally astonished and terrified at my behaviour.

"Never can I forget the effect which this communication produced upon my mind, although I had never dared to promise myself an absolute certainty of possessing Amelia's hand; yet, in the first moments of my fury, I could have sacrificed the unknown rival who deprived me of it; and I was at once enraged with her

for loving him, and with myself, for having believed that she loved me.

"A night's reflection rendered me more just to Amelia. I was forced to confess that her behaviour to me had been always that of a sister, and I began to believe, that being three years older than myself, she had, perhaps, construed my regard for her into friendship. But this supposition, though it justified her, did not render me less unhappy, and some days elapsed before I could bring myself to speak to her, even on indifferent subjects.

"Her eyes were sometimes turned upon me with an expression of tender reproach, which pierced my heart: they seemed to say, "unkind Frederic! is it not enough for me to be wretched, must you aggravate my sorrows, by capriciously withdrawing your friendship from me, at the moment in which I have the greatest need of it?"

"I was not proof to this mute but touching eloquence: my heart became softened, and I began to consider that,

although I could never be happy myself, I might yet perhaps succeed in rendering Amelia so. To be brief, I took an opportunity of questioning her, although it wrung my heart to do so, as to the means most likely to bring about their union; and I learned that her lover was wholly dependent on his father, who having himself but a very small fortune, refused his consent on account of Amelia's being wholly portionless; although he often declared to his son, that if she had even a small dower, he would prefer her for a daughter-in-law to any other woman.

"Then you shall soon be united to your lover, Amelia," said I, with forced calmness. I quitted her without coming to any explanation, and hastening to Madame Hansler, besought her to accept from me a marriage portion for Amelia. Madame Hansler heard me with joy and wonder; but she was generous and disinterested enough to dissuade me from impoverishing myself. She talked to the

winds. What was poverty to a man who had bade farewell to happiness?

"I was not cool enough to reason the point; but I assured Madame Hansler, that, if she would not accept the sum which I offered as a marriage portion for her daughter, I would bestow it upon the first person whom I met that would take it. This threat had the desired effect. Madame Hansler wrote immediately to the father of Amelia's lover, and it was settled that in a few months the young people were to be united.

"Three weeks afterwards my grandmther breathed her last, and I felt as if every tie that bound me to earth was once more broken. For her sake I had borne up under the affliction with which the death of my father had overwhelmed me; but now there was no motive to stimulate me to exertion.

"It may perhaps appear strange, that at my age, I should so easily have suffered my spirits to be broken; but it must be recollected that a first disappointment sinks

deeply into the mind, especially into the mind of a being so isolated as I was.

"The sensible and friendly remonstrances of Madame Hansler, first roused me from the stupor which I was gradually sinking into. She was no stranger to my situation with the Delmain family, and she represented to me that it was a mark of respect due to the memory of my deceased father, as well as to the Earl of Delmain, to visit England, now that the melancholy event, which we had so long expected, had left me at liberty to do so.

"I knew that my guardian had written immediately on the demise of my grandmother, and I saw that I must set out for England, or give up the proposed alliance immediately. I should not have hesitated to do the latter, had not my promise to my deceased parent prevented me, but I felt a sort of certainty that I should find Lady Cecilia averse to the match, and this idea gave me real pleasure.

"This notion arose partly from my own sense of the personal disadvantage which

I laboured under, and partly from the regret which Madame Hansler often expressed that I had not some opportunities of acquiring the polish indispensable to my rank, before I presented myself to Lady Cecilia.

" She will refuse me," said I to myself. " and perhaps with contempt. No matter, I shall have done my duty, and her rejection, though it may hurt my pride, cannot wound my heart."

" Oh how much was I mistaken ! but let me not anticipate. Though I quitted Germany, in the firm belief that I should be equally miserable in England, I yet found my spirits insensibly lighten during my journey ; but the fatigue I suffered was too much for me ; and although I avoided complaint, I was seriously ill when I arrived at the house of the Earl.

" I saw, or at least I fancied I saw, under the cordiality with which he welcomed me, a degree of surprise and disappointment, which I attributed to my ill health, and unpolished manners. But this idea, instead of stimulating me to shew that I

was not quite the uninformed stupid being which I must have appeared, only rendered my *mauvaise honte*, more inveterate.

"I was struck at the first sight of Lady Cecilia, with her uncommon loveliness; but I believed that I felt only admiration of her beauty, for I fancied my heart was steeled to every other sensation.

"Of her disposition I could scarcely judge, from the impenetrable reserve and coldness with which she treated me. I could not, however, conceive that this coldness was natural to her, for it was plain that she loved her father and uncle tenderly.

"But I am not born to be loved," said I bitterly to myself, "and even if I was worthy of her regard, she would look upon me perhaps with aversion or contempt. Has not Madame Weimar often told me, that these proud and sullen glish, always despise every nation but their own. Oh! doubtless Cecilia partakes in the sentiments common to her country, and even the Earl himself,

in planning this marriage, may perhaps have been actuated, more by a desire to repay the service accidentally rendered him by my father, than by a wish for our alliance."

CHAPTER XXXI.

"It would be difficult, almost impossible, to describe my sensations, when I heard that Lady Cecilia had consented to bestow her hand upon me. I ought indeed to have been convinced, from the manner in which her consent was given, that her heart did not speak in my favour; but the weak state of the Earl, rendered it dangerous to debate the subject with him, and Cecilia's ready acquiescence with his will, led me to hope that I should only have indifference to surmount, for of her determined repugnance to the match I had no suspicion.

"I had now been long enough in England to have conquered some of my prejudices. I began to hope that I had mistaken the character of Cecilia. I resolved seriously to set about rendering myself

worthy of her; and I trusted to time, and the ardour of my attachment, to secure a return of love from her.

"I need not say how cruelly these hopes were disappointed. Yet I felt that I had in some degree deserved my fate. I ought to have learned her sentiments from her own lips; had I done so, means might have been found to evade the performance of the marriage ceremony, till the death of her father should leave her at liberty openly to refuse me.

"All that the circumstances in which we were now placed would admit me to do for her comfort, I resolved to do immediately. The first step to be taken was, to signify my perfect willingness to dissolve our marriage, and the next to quit England, as I believed, for ever.

"I hastened back to my paternal mansion, which I regretted now a thousand times that I had ever left. I had requested Madame Hansler would remain there during my absence, and I found with her Charles Anhalt, the lover of Amelia.

" This young man's gratitude to me for procuring him the hand of his beloved, was boundless ; and he shewed it in so lively and engaging a manner, that I found it impossible to refuse him my friendship. He was soon acquainted with the particulars of my marriage.

" My dear Baron," said he, " you have made a wrong, but I trust, not a irrevocably wrong step. However, it can do no good to revert to the past, let us think, only of the future,—you must go into the world. You have studied books long enough, you must now read men, perhaps in doing so, you may find the means of repairing past errors.

" At first, I sullenly refused this proposal. Charles was not discouraged, he returned to the charge again and again. He had seen some service, and he sometimes spoke to me of the actions in which he had been engaged. I listened at first with indifference, but I soon caught a spark of his military ardour, and I resolved to enter the army.

" Fearful that the Countess, if she knew

my intention, would employ a part of her fortune in procuring me promotion, I changed my name, and dropping my title, I entered the Prussian service, under the appellation of Gortz.

Fortune favoured me. I had many opportunities of signalising myself, and I valued existence so little, that I rushed into danger with a madness, which was miscalled heroism. Perhaps there is no life so favourable to friendship as an active military one; the many opportunities which companions in arms have to save or serve each other, binds them more closely together in a campaign or two, than years of intimacy can do in common life, so at least it was with me. I no longer felt myself an isolated being; life became supportable though not desirable; and I acquired, by degrees, the secret of partially losing sight of my own misfortunes, by ministering to the comforts of others,

" But was Cecilia forgotten? Ah, no! she was far too tenderly remembered. The more I saw of the world, the more I became convinced, that it was impossible

for me to have inspired her with any sentiment but aversion. Yet, though Anhalt continually repeated to me that a few years had made an astonishing change, both in my manners and appearance; though I was myself conscious that I had neglected no opportunity for improvement, I had not the courage to present myself a second time before her, though I learned, with inexpressible delight, that among her numerous admirers, there was not one whom she was supposed to favour.

"It was in the fifth year of our separation that I had the small pox; it was of so virulent a nature, that my life was supposed to be in considerable danger; great care and skill brought me safely through it, but it materially altered my features.

"Anhalt, who had often pressed me to endeavour to effect a re-union with the Countess, now started the romantic scheme of my presenting myself to her in disguise. For a long time I rejected it, but at last I consented, rather to satisfy his importu-

nity, than from any faith I had in the probable success of the experiment.

"For many reasons I deemed it proper to take Lord George into my confidence; and I was hastening to Belleville Lodge, determined to explain all to him, and to abide by his advice, when chance, or rather, I should say, Providence led me to the rescue of my Cecilia.

"When I found that it was her whom I had saved from becoming the prey of a villain, I had nearly betrayed myself; but an instant sense of the importance which this meeting might be of to me, enabled me to conquer my emotion. I took the precaution to reveal myself to Lord George as soon as I arrived at the lodge, and his evident joy at seeing me, his cordial welcome, and sanguine hopes of my success greatly encouraged me, and enabled me to meet Cecilia with tolerable spirits. Nor did I forget the caution he gave me to disguise my voice by affecting a lisp.

"An aukward consciousness of the deception which I was practising, prevented



me, however, from paying the Countess more than the attention, which, as her guest, and a gentleman, I was obliged to do; and so extremely guarded was her behaviour, that I was about to retreat in despair, believing, to say the truth, that Colonel Gortz, though perhaps less disagreeable, was quite as much an object of indifference to her as Baron Wallenstein.

"My dear Lord George, my kind Lady Westbrook, what do I not owe ye for your remonstrances, I may say commands: but for them I should never have had courage to make that effort, which has secured to me the greatest happiness which this world can give."

"Lord George hastened to present the supposed Colonel Gortz as Baron Wallenstein, and his intended nephew to the guests of the Countess. They wondered a little, congratulated the young couple, observed, that the story was quite a little romance; and if one might judge from the expression of their faces, both Miss

Nesbit and her sentimental cousin, wished to have been the heroine of it.

We have only farther to say, that the reunited couple proved a very unfashionable pair. United to a husband to whom she looked up equally with love and veneration, Cecilia gradually imbibed his tastes and habits. All that was amiable in her character was confirmed, and all that was faulty gradually disappeared.

Wallenstein found in her a cheerful and able assistant in all his benevolent plans. His just and elegant taste in literature guided and improved hers, and the consciousness that their existence was useful to all around them, rendered it doubly delightful to themselves.

Lady Westbrook always continued the attached friend of Cecilia; and Lord George, at the desire of the Countess and Wallenstein, took up his abode with them. In contemplating their happiness, and in assisting to form the minds of their three lovely children, he often declared that he felt a renovation of his own youthful days;

and he has more than once protested that in sharing the happiness of his married friends, he has totally forgotten that he is himself that miserable, isolated being, an old bachelor!

END OF VOL. II.

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